

HOME NEWS

Divorce by post to be allowed in Scotland

By Our Education Correspondent

Divorce laws have come of age and should be allowed to stand and validate degrees, Mr Terence Miller, Director of the North London Polytechnic, says in a report issued yesterday. At present, all non-university degrees have to be validated by the Council for National Academic Awards.

There can be no doubt about the value of the North London Polytechnic's association with the council since the polytechnic's establishment in 1971, Mr Miller says in the introduction to his report to the court of governors for the academic years 1975-77. The present pattern and standard of teaching could not have been achieved in any other way, he adds.

"But the growing-up process, which has taken place in a very patchy and piecemeal way, must now be considered virtually complete. The polytechnic is, in my opinion, capable of validating its own degrees. Ideally all polytechnics should be given royal charters and be made fully independent.

The polytechnic's continued dependence on the Council for National Academic Awards placed a great obstacle in the way of wide reforms.

By accident the North London Polytechnic was atypical among polytechnics in that its engineering component was small and specialised, and its pure sciences and "straight" humanities unusually strong.

Mr Miller asks: "Is it sensible for a polytechnic, with its limited resources, to continue to depend on the Council for National Academic Awards, which are much better equipped to do it? Should we not be looking to the differ-

Plea for polytechnics to validate degrees

ences expected in a polytechnic graduate as compared with a university graduate? There is evidence that employers already think rightly or wrongly, that there is a difference.

Dr Miller gives a warning against the delusive attractiveness of the "modular" study structures, adopted by many polytechnics and some universities and designed to combine maximum flexibility in course design with maximum freedom of student choice.

The approach has two potential weaknesses in Mr Miller's view: it tends to produce jacks of all trades and masters of none; and it often involves a complex organizational network which needs an over-inflated bureaucratic support.

Mr Miller comments in the report on the students' eighth week occupation of the polytechnic's administration block last spring which resulted in loss, damage and expenses totalling £5,500.

The students' union accepted responsibility for some personal losses and repaid £223 in compensation, but disclaimed responsibility for the remaining £5,279 on the ground that that was the work of "extremists", not of official union representatives.

The polytechnic cannot sue the students' union because it is not a corporate body and is in any case technically part of the polytechnic, Mr Miller points out. He said yesterday that he hoped any government review of student union responsibility would recommend a change in the union's legal status so as to make it liable in law.

Treasury appointment may herald dawning of microeconomic age Deputy chief adviser sees need for flexibility

By Melvyn Westlake and Caroline Atkinson

Perhaps more than any other job in the Treasury, the post of deputy chief economic adviser depends on what the incumbent wants to make it. It has been unkindly likened to the job of United States Vice-President. In so far as that analogy is valid, it does indicate the absence of any clear organizational responsibility in the deputy adviser's job.

But that can be its strength as much as its weakness, at least in the sense that it allows a much freer rein to innovate and follow where instinct leads.

Fitting such a role should be easy for Mr Ian Byatt, who takes over the job tomorrow. With one exception, the positions that he has held since undertaking postgraduate research at Nutfield have all been freshly created and therefore have not provided Ian Byatt with any clear, well-trodden path to follow.

Mr Geoffrey Maynard, neither of whom remained long in the job. Indeed, Mr Maynard left the Treasury last November after only 12 months in the post.

Like all good Treasury men, he is reluctant to discuss his personal views on contemporary economic issues. He will not describe himself as either a Keynesian or a monetarist, but rather as a "pragmatist" taking the best from both schools of thought.

But he does see the need for a continuing, if flexible, incomes policy. On the thorny question of whether the pound should be allowed to appreciate to help to reduce inflation, or to decline to maintain export competitiveness, he might be construed as coming down marginally in favour of the latter, although his words have to be sifted carefully to permit that conclusion to be drawn. He does emphasise the practical constraints on holding down the pound when foreign money is flooding into Britain.



Mr Ian Byatt: Emphasis on the practical.

Inevitably, his background as a microeconomist will influence his approach to the new job.

In his present role as head of the public sector economic group he has spent his time giving economic advice in the controversial area of public spending, as well as being closely involved in working out new ground rules for running the nationalized industries.

One of his main achievements, he thinks, is a new emphasis on the practical rather than theoretical difficulties of running those concerns.

His inclination towards the practical side of life is shown by his choice of subject for his thesis: the early development of the electrical industry and the relationship between tech-

nology and economic development.

Given the unstructured nature of his new post, some clear view of what it should entail is clearly necessary if he is not to dissipate his energies.

In a very imprecise way he sees the job as having three elements. The first is to act as adviser to the three second permanent secretaries who run three of the Treasury's four divisions. The other is in the core of the chief economic adviser and is essentially concerned with economic forecasting.

In that advisory capacity he may be venturing into areas that are less familiar to him, notably international finance and money matters.

Keeping abreast of new thinking

His second function will be to keep in touch with the many professional economists beavering away in different parts of Whitehall. His third will be to keep abreast of new thinking about economics in the universities and elsewhere.

The biggest difficulty will no doubt be in exerting an influence in a department that is not short of economic advice without treading on the toes of others. But with the great importance attached to the industrial strategy, the day of the microeconomist may have dawned.

IBA hoping for six more radio stations

By Kenneth Gosling

With more than two hundred applications from 60 areas to operate independent local radio stations the Independent Broadcasting Authority is hopeful that the Home Secretary will shortly approve an initial batch of six, spread around the country, to begin broadcasting next year.

Ideally the authority would like to see stations get under way in Cardiff, North-east Scotland, the western side of Northern Ireland, Gloucester, Cheltenham, Peterborough and Coventry.

The 19 present stations are all well established and financially secure. The question of extending the number to 25, with up to 15 others added later, is understood to be at the top of the agenda for the Home Secretary and his colleagues concerned with producing a White Paper after publication of the Annan report.

No legislation would be required and finance would come from local backers. The White Paper might be short and a Bill might follow, allowing for certain minor extensions of the Independent Broadcasting Authority Act and the BBC charter, both of which come up for renewal next year.

That would mean the shelving until after the election of the more controversial proposals made by Annan, such as the allocation of a fourth television channel.

Theatres in peril, 2: Agreement

Reluctantly on Birmingham Hippodrome

Criticism of Lord Grade

By Martin Huckerby

THE public future of the Birmingham Hippodrome has once again become the subject of angry criticism, with local councillors, including Lord Grade, chairman of ATV, for unwilling to use the pro-gramme television to help to "save" the theatre, which is owned by another of his companies, Moss Empires.

Private tempers are not high, and it looks increasingly likely that agreement will be reached in a few weeks when West Midlands County Council and Moss Empires meet to discuss the future of the 1,300-seat theatre, which is one of several that Moss Empires are seeking to dispose of, and Birmingham City Council, which is providing heavy subsidies to other theatres in the city, has no wish to take on her commitments.

West Midlands County Council is more enthusiastic, and Mr Anthony Beattie, chairman of the council's finance committee, has hoped that within a fortnight they would have an agreement.

He said the private talks the company had been holding. The council was looking for an agreement that would provide the theatre at a certain sum, and Lord Grade recognized that Birmingham was a difficult case because of the presence of ATV in the region.

Lord Grade, who is chairman of Moss Empires, was rather forthright. He said the next would be discussed at board meeting next month, and the future of the Hippodrome may be safeguarded by an agreement between the sides, it might still be in the long run.

Dark suggested that the council might decide to make a commitment for only five years, but he believed a minimum of £70,000 would be needed to keep the Hippodrome open, and he was sure that it was the only way to save the theatre.

companies, but he was more concerned about possible annual loss of £60,000 in running the theatre.

The council will be seeking industrial and commercial sponsorship, but he thought the future would depend on whether enough people used the theatre and, on whether it was known, which is a work in the province.

Be felt that over the five years there would be some soul-searching about theatres in the area and that might lead to a reduction in the total number of theatres.

Such development would thus threaten the survival of the theatre in Birmingham, which is supported by the city council.

One of the reasons why the city is unwilling to put money into the Hippodrome is that the council believes that the "Alec", as it is widely known, could, after minor improvements, accommodate almost all the touring companies.

The 1,300-seat theatre is doing pretty well at present, with bookings through to July, but it still needs a subsidy from the city of about £55,000 a year.

Few people in the theatre world seem optimistic about the prospects of a provincial city supporting more than one theatre for touring shows and if there is to be only one such theatre in Birmingham in the long run it is likely that the Hippodrome will be the survivor.

The reason for that is that the Arts Council-supported touring companies are increasingly dominating the provincial circuit, and the Arts Council strongly backs the Hippodrome.

Mr Jack Phipps, the council's director of touring, said a survey showed that £370,000 was needed to bring the Hippodrome technically up to scratch, and he believed that over two or three years the council would probably provide a third of the money.

Next: Manchester

Sea outfall plan leaves an offensive odour

A recent full-page advertisement in *The Cambrian*, the Welsh Water authority stated that its proposal to discharge sewage from Swansea by way of sea outfall a mile long has led to criticism. It is, as the paper says, a classic understatement. The £3m plan has been an emotional battleground between townspeople fighting an ecological and environmental battle and the authority, which defends the principle of the scientific dot the principle of discharging sewage to the sea.

Water authority had earlier that a public meeting at Swansea Town Hall would allow public suspicion, a representative ran into a flak and retired in their headquarters to plan the move.

Signs of high-handedness are part of the authority fuelled by a sense of frustration engendered by a realization that the objects seem to be democratic means of getting the authority to heed feelings.

Regional report

Tim Jones Aberystwyth

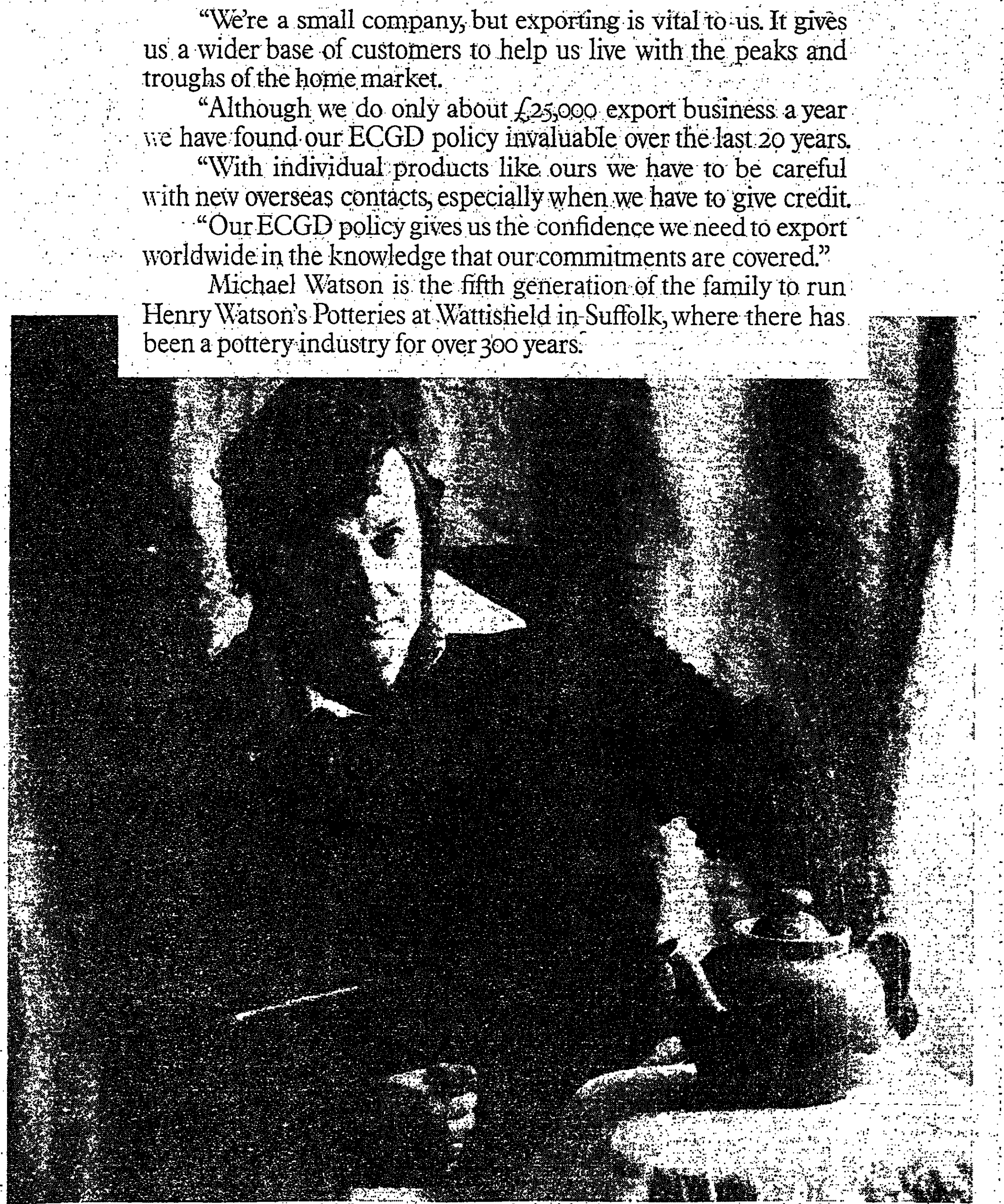
who are almost as one in their opposition to the scheme.

Their feelings were further offended by the refusal of the authority to make their detailed reports generally available on the ground that "its circulation to the lay public could only lead to misunderstandings."

The authority says it has described its proposals in detail to interested parties.

A long sea outfall, the authority maintains, will satisfy the most stringent health and amenity standards discharging sewage of a similar quality to that of effluent from a conventional treatment works.

Both sides agree that the present arrangements for Aberystwyth, where the sewage is discharged into the harbour, are unsatisfactory and the overwhelming opinion in the town favours a plan in which the sewage can be treated before it is discharged.



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HOME NEWS

Council's rejection
of race job
monitoring opposed

Annabel Ferriman, in an attempt by the London Borough of Lewisham to start monitoring the ethnic origins of job applicants and of people employed, was dropped last week because of protests from local workers who felt that the council had gone far enough along the road to equality. But community relations officers want the policy to be implemented.

because of protests by members of the National Union of Public Employees (Nupe).

Mrs Cynthia Humble, chairman of the Lewisham branch of Nupe, said yesterday it had opposed the proposal. "The council already had an equal opportunities policy. We thought, from our members' point of view, that was sufficient," she said.

The suggested policy would only have made more paperwork and was unnecessary because the council had managed without it in the past. If anyone felt he had been unfairly treated he could complain to the community relations council.

Denial by
palace on
statement's
ming

Luckingham Palace denied today that Sir Harold Ikin, Lord of the Manor, had issued a statement to draw publicity to the news that the Queen's marriage to Prince Charles had broken up. "The statement is a forgery," said a spokesman.

The book says that when Sir Harold told the Queen: "Well, I am, do you think this would be a good idea?" and offered to announce her resignation to coincide with the wedding.

According to the book, which is being serialised in the *Daily Mirror*, Sir Harold's offer was "very opposed by Lady Falkender, his personal and political secretary."

Mr. Harold's former press secretary, Mr. Joe Haines, said yesterday: "Sir Harold did not make any of his discussion with the Queen. But a palace official he later leaked the contents of the separation to a local newspaper within a matter of days of the resignation announcement."

'Rush' over medicine
curbs upsets chemists

By a Staff Reporter

Chemists and drug manufacturers are angry at new government regulations that restrict the sale of several well-known medicines. There have been complaints of short notice, and Dr Gerard Vaughan, Conservative MP for Reading, South, intends to raise the issue in the Commons.

The regulations published on January 5, are designed to limit the quantities of codeine, morphine and other such substances that can be sold without a doctor's prescription. From tomorrow some medicines that have been freely available from chemists will require a prescription, unless the contents are changed.

Others, such as Collyer's Balm, invented as a way of treating dysentery at the time of the Crimean War, and Kwell's travel pills, will be available without prescription only if their labels have been changed to recommend a lower dose.

The Pharmaceutical Society,



Three medals in a month: Bugle-Major Colin Green, of The Royal Green Jackets, seen yesterday with General Sir Edwin Bramall, Commander-in-Chief, United Kingdom Land Forces, after receiving the British Empire Medal and the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal. Both decorations, and the Queen's Silver Jubilee Medal, were awarded to him last June. The general and the bugle-major served together in 2nd Battalion, The Green Jackets.

£50,000 attempt to
settle bottle issue

By Pearce Wright
Science Editor

Research costing £50,000 is taking place to resolve the arguments about disposable bottles versus returnable ones, and the possibilities for recycling metal containers for scrap.

The issue is one over which the National Waste Management Advisory Council, with representatives from the Department of Industry, Department of the Environment, manufacturers from the packaging industries, and consumer and environmental groups have been deadlocked for more than two years.

The study is divided into three sections: to determine the extent of raw materials absorbed in the production of these containers; the energy consumed, from the supply of raw materials and manufacturing to the distribution of the finished product; and an economic analysis of present and alternative operations to cover all labour and capital costs.

The energy and raw material

issues will be examined by a group at the Open University under a £13,500 project. An economic assessment will be conducted through the operations research unit of the Department of Industry.

Proposals for an economic assessment have proved the stumbling block hitherto. An answer is now sought before the end of the year in light of a draft directive by the EEC for member countries to use more returnable containers in packaging. A separate review of conditions in the Community is being conducted by the commission before drawing up regulations.

The environmental groups suggest that a standard-shaped reusable container offers savings in energy consumption, waste disposal costs, and in more economic distribution. But they accept that insufficient information has been assembled to show with certainty which type or combination of materials for the packaging of foods and beverages is most in the public interest.

In brief

Union move over
six firemen

The Fire Brigades Union is to seek an injunction today against Mr Peter Darby, Chief Officer of the London Fire Brigade and the Greater London Council after the dismissal of six firemen.

Mr Richard Foggie, deputy general secretary, said yesterday that the union was trying to prevent Mr Darby from dismissing the men without using the statutory disciplinary procedure.

Six men have been charged with 25 offences, including unlawful sexual intercourse and indecent assault, over the past six months and are to appear on February 10 at Rotherham Magistrates' Court, South Yorkshire.

The offences are alleged to have taken place in the Wickersley area of Rotherham and to have involved girls aged between 13 and 16. The police said other charges might follow.

Trident check
for wing cracks

After discovery of a hairline crack in a wing British Airways' 15 Trident II airliners are to be examined as they become due for maintenance.

British Airways said yesterday that the fault was easily repaired by inserting a bolt and was small compared with the wing cracks that caused the grounding of the Trident III fleet last year.

£2,000 gem may
be lost in food

A young couple may have bought a Chinese take-away meal containing a 1.8 carat diamond valued at £2,000. Mrs Yuet Lan Lai, noticed the gem was missing from her "ping shou" after serving the couple at her shop in The Parade, Moulton, Kent.

She searched the shop but found nothing. A police officer said: "Someone may have eaten it and never even known."

Air fares cut

New low return fares from Britain to Canada are announced by British Airways and Air Canada for mid-week travel after April 1. An example is London to Manchester to Toronto (low season) £139, (high season) £199.

Budget blackout

"Television and radio coverage of tomorrow's Irish Republic Budget is threatened by a dispute at RIE, the country's state-run broadcasting station, involving members of the National Union of Journalists."

WEST EUROPE

Police seeking seized
baron find clue in
three-murder hunt

From Ian Murray
Paris, Jan 30

As private negotiations continue for the release of Baron Edouard-Jean Empain, the kidnapped Belgian industrialist, the French police have kept up the intensive search operation, particularly in the Paris area.

If no trace has so far been found of the baron or his kidnappers, the police have at least some success in the trail of the other main quarry, they are hunting, M Yves Maupetit, who is wanted in connexion with three murders. They have also arrested 59 others on suspicion of a number of crimes.

Over the weekend the different police forces had 13,800 men on special duty hunting for the baron and the wanted man. They set up 2,760 road blocks or special patrols, checked 135,000 cars and 198,000 people, and searched 5,600 houses and country cottages.

It was while a patrol was searching in the area of Claye-Souilly, near Meaux, in the Seine-et-Marne department, that they stumbled on the hiding place of M Maupetit. Late on Saturday they noticed a stolen car parked outside what appeared to be an abandoned house. On closer inspection they noticed a feeble light coming out through one of the chimneys in the door, and sent for reinforcements to surround the house.

Their caution was understandable as the last that was heard of M Maupetit was a telephone call to the newspaper *L'Aurore* in which he said that he had

nothing to lose and that he was armed with a grenade and a gun and intended to use them on anyone who attempted to catch him.

Having encircled the house, the police entered it but they found no trace of the baron. A smoking cigarette end in an ashtray and a lit candle to show how close they had been, among the items left behind were several belonging to M Maupetit, the police say, and a map of the area showing where the road blocks had been put up.

The search has, however, still failed to throw up any clues on what happened to the baron. It seems that the police are prepared to let the family continue to make arrangements to pay a ransom—said to be 50m francs (£5.5m) even though this is contrary to government policy. Once the baron was freed they would feel less constrained to move against the gang that holds him.

The delicate negotiations apparently centre on how such a vast sum can be handed over. If this were to be in straight cash it would be too bulky to transport and dispose of with any ease. If it were to be paid in any other way it would make detection of the gang much easier. The likelihood is that the gang is seeking payment in different currencies and in different places.

Official spokesmen from the police and the Ministry of the Interior are keeping quiet about what is happening so that many rumours are current in the press.

Court told
of 10 days in
spy school

Paris, Jan 30—A man standing trial here on charges of spying for the Soviet Union for 10 years today described how he was recruited by a Soviet diplomat in Paris and given a free holiday in Moscow.

Sergei Fyodorovich, a Russian migrant, told the state security court that a diplomat named Ivan came to inspect his fire prevention products factory in the Paris suburbs in 1962 with a view to giving him an export licence.

The two became friends and Ivan offered him a free holiday in Moscow together with a false French passport, as he was not then a naturalized French citizen.

"I had a romantic desire to have a homeland for me, it was not the Soviet Union, but the Russia of my parents," he told the court.

After his holiday he spent 10 days in a spy school learning how to use a radio transmitter, write coded messages and use invisible ink.

M Fabieu is accused along with Giovanni Ferrero, an Italian, and Marc Lefevre and Maurice Laval, both French, of operating an espionage network that passed on information about radar, computers and missiles to the Soviet Union.

M Fabieu said today that in 1964 he was made head of the network in charge of three other agents after a second trip to Moscow.

The three were Signor Ferrero, who worked for the French subsidiary of Fiat, M Lefevre, a specialist in radar and airport navigation installations, and M Laval, an engineer who is now in hospital in an advanced stage of senility.

Neo-fascist's
trial opens
in Florence

From Our Own Correspondent
Rome, Jan 30

The trial opened today in Florence of a right-wing extremist, Pierluigi Concutelli, the chief accused in the shooting in July, 1976, of Vittorio Occorsio, the Rome public prosecutor who conducted a legal attack on the right-wing organization Ordine Nuovo.

It began late because four of the popular Judges, an office between a jurymen and a member of the bench, failed to appear. Others had to be chosen and summoned to the court.

The defence also objected to the cage built specially in the courtroom to house the accused; it was decided not to use it.

The conduct of the trial will be watched closely because of the controversy after the acquittal by a Rome court of more than 100 alleged members of Ordine Nuovo.

The judiciary came under attack for alleged leniency towards neo-fascist terrorism. The object of holding the hearings in Florence was to remove them from the atmosphere here after Signor Occorsio's murder.

This morning disorders broke out in Rome, linked to the trial by left-wing students. They were protesting against the threat against them of the police using the measure of sending known troublemakers to the country, a device used mainly against suspected members of the Mafia.

The hearing of a request for the use of this measure was rejected today by a court. The demonstration was not authorized.

Mutiny plan suspected at
jail where two were shot

From Our Own Correspondent
Paris, Jan 30

Prison warders searching the cells at Clairvaux Prison today found two knives, one still being made, leading them to suspect that a prison mutiny might have been under way.

Clairvaux is one of the main high-security prisons in France, reserved for long-term prisoners and with 64 of its 320 inmates serving life sentences. A mutiny there in July, 1974, caused a wave of unrest in prisons throughout France.

Today's search followed the desperate attempt to escape on Saturday by two men, using a pistol which had somehow been smuggled in. The two, both convicted murderers, took a number of warders as hostages and tried to bargain. Eventually they were both shot dead by police marksmen using rifles with telescopic sights.

M Francois La Phuong, the lawyer of one of the two prisoners, has told of receiving a letter from the man three months ago. The prisoner had written that he felt himself to be a human outcast since he could not look forward to ever leaving prison.

Two other prisoners at Clairvaux were sentenced to death for the murder of a guard and a nurse when they tried to hold them as hostages in 1971. That incident led to a reform programme for French prisons, but it apparently made little difference to life in Clairvaux.

An inquiry into Saturday's incident is primarily concerned with finding out how the gun got into the prison. But the likelihood is that it will also produce more arguments for reforms which would separate the long-term prisoners.

Legal slip over
parking
meter payments

From Our Own Correspondent
Bonn, Jan 30

West Germans, who for years have dutifully been slipping their 10 pfennig pieces into the country's 200,000 parking meters, have learnt that they need never have done so.

An administrative court in Mannheim has ruled that, because of a curious oversight in the law, local authorities are allowed to put up parking meters but not to require people to put money into them.

The case was brought by a Heidelberg lawyer who was irritated when a row of parking meters appeared in the parking space in front of his office. The ruling, however, does not come into force until it has been reviewed by the federal administrative court in West Berlin.

Moluccan leader
critically ill
after being shot

The Hague, Jan 30—Two South Moluccans have shot and wounded a Moluccan leader who tried to mediate in some of the big Moluccan terrorist acts of the past few years, the police said today.

They said Mr Theo Kuhuwal, who has been "education minister" in the exiled government of the self-styled "President" Johannes Manusama of the "South Moluccan Republic", was shot in the back yesterday when he answered his doorbell. The hospital described his condition as critical.

Mrs Manusama said she assumed the attack might be connected with a study visit to Indonesia, which governs the South Moluccans, Mr Kuhuwal and four other Moluccans had planned to start Saturday. Militants regard such visits as treason—UPI.

Atomic energy
body seeks
drilling approval

The United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority lodged an application with the Kyle and Carrick District Council at Ayr yesterday for permission to do test drilling in south Ayrshire for a possible nuclear waste disposal site.

The planning application, which may be called in by Mr Millan, Secretary of State for Scotland, for his personal decision, has prompted protests. Dr Frank Feates, the authority's director of environmental safety, failed to placate the opposition at several public meetings.

Mr John Hill, chief executive of the Kyle and Carrick council, said yesterday that unless Mr Millan intervened the council would probably consider the application on April 18. Many other bodies would have to be consulted.

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Tory sees danger in state
cash for inquiry objectors

By Roger Violevoe
Energy Correspondent

If suggestions of government finance for objectors at public inquiries were put into practice a precedent might be set that could commit the Government to an open-ended financing of pressure groups.

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Naafi warehouse inquiry
demanded by counsel

An investigation was demanded at Salisbury Crown Court, yesterday, into the security arrangements at a Naafi warehouse. The demand was made by Mr Nigel Pascoe, for the Crown, in a case in which he criticized the management of the warehouse at Amesbury.

He said vast thefts had been going on for many years at the warehouse, which was the nerve centre of a national distribution network. The blame must fall squarely on the management, which had repeatedly ignored police demands for tighter security.

Before the court were two

former employees, Steven Locke, aged 21, a former policeman, of Mary Tavey, Devon, and James Davies, aged 18, of Bursford, Wiltshire, both said to be on the fringe of the offences. Each admitted seven charges involving the dishonest handling and disposal of portable television sets, digital watches and cartoons of cigarettes and confectionery.

Mr Davies was sentenced to 200 hours' community service and Mr Locke was given a year's jail sentence, suspended for two years.

The court was told that more suspects were being interviewed and further prosecutions were expected.

Crop loss from pollution

A significant loss of crops because of high air pollution has been discovered by researchers at Rothamsted Experimental Station. In the latest issue of *Chemistry and Industry* they suggest that the trouble has gone unnoticed because for the past 40 years investigation into the effects of aerial pollution on plants has focused on visible damage.

They concentrated on cereal crops and measured the damage caused to the rate of plant growth and yields in the valley running south-south west from Bedford to a distance of seven miles in which the Bedfordshire brickfields are sited. The main pollutants in the air are sulphur dioxide, fluoride and microorganisms that give the fumes of the kilns their characteristic odour but seems to cause little harm to plants.

Aircraft noise trials

Arthur Reed, in an effort to reduce noise around airports made by landing aircraft the Civil Aviation Authority began a 12-month period of continuous descent approach trials at Gatwick yesterday.

During the trials, airliners

will be directed to approach the airport at a higher altitude than usual. From a point 10 miles from the runway they will then make a continuous descent, avoiding the application of engine power to level off before the final approach to the airport.

THE
HALIFAX
BUILDING SOCIETYNotice to existing and
prospective investors and
borrowers

Variation of Interest Rates

The Directors of The Halifax Building Society announce that the rates of interest charged to borrowers and paid to investors will be reduced as provided by the terms of this notice.

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The rates of interest charged on mortgage accounts will be reduced as follows:

on mortgages now charged interest at 9.50 per cent per annum to 8.50 per cent per annum
on mortgages now charged interest at 9.75 per cent per annum to 8.75 per cent per annum

Other borrowers including option mortgage borrowers will be notified individually of their new rates of interest.

The new rates will apply immediately to mortgages offered on or after 16th January 1978

on and after 1st February 1978 to mortgages completed before 16th January 1978

Other borrowers will be notified individually of the monthly payments they should make.

Investors

The Society will pay the undermentioned rates of interest on the following kinds of investments:

Paid-Up Shares — £5.50 per cent per annum
Deposits — £5.25 per cent per annum
Monthly Savings — £6.75 per cent per annum

The rate of interest on Subscription Shares and on Matured Subscription Shares will be reduced by £0.50 per cent per annum.

The new rates will apply immediately to accounts opened on or after 16th January 1978

on and after 1st February 1978 to accounts open at the end of January 1978

The rate of interest on Term Share accounts open at the end of January 1978 will be reduced by £0.50 per cent per annum from 6 and of February 1978.

The rates mentioned above will not apply to investors whose investments (including shares in joint investments) exceed £5,000 or are held by a limited company or corporate body or a discretionary or accumulating trust. The rate of interest payable to these investors in the Paid-Up Shares and Deposit Investments will be reduced by £0.50 per cent per annum.

Details of the rates of interest payable on investments in other investments will be available at branches and agencies before 1 February 1978.

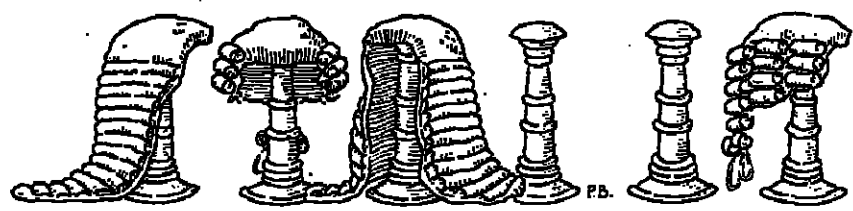
Halifax Building Society

January 1978

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Legal appointments



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MID GLAMORGAN COUNTY COUNCIL Department of the County Clerk and Chief Executive

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Mid Glamorgan County Council (the largest local authority in Wales) has a vacancy for a Senior Assistant Solicitor arising from the promotion of the present holder to the post of Assistant County Clerk.

Salary: £6,916 to £7,594 per annum, inclusive of nationally negotiated supplements.

(Starting Salary may be above minimum of the scale.)

The Department is responsible for both the legal and central administrative services of the County Council and wide experience can be afforded to ambitious officers. This post is attached to the Personnel Services Division of the Department, headed by an Assistant County Clerk and is next in seniority. The holder will have both legal and administrative responsibilities within the Division and will also advise the Personnel Unit and represent the County Council before the Industrial Tribunals.

Opportunity will be given for the holder to gain experience in other aspects of Departmental work in due course. The County Council's scheme for the payment of lodging allowance and removal expenses will apply. Casual car user allowance will be made.

NATIONAL CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

Application forms (to be returned by 15 February, 1978) and further details may be obtained from the County Clerk and Chief Executive, Mid Glamorgan County Council, County Hall, Cardiff, or by telephoning Cardiff 28033 and asking to speak to the Deputy County Clerk.

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Duties include interesting and often complex advice, preparation in important criminal matters, and frequent attendance at Magistrates Courts to conduct prosecutions. Essential car user allowance and assistance with car purchase; removal and lodging allowances in approved cases.

Application forms obtainable from the Chief Prosecuting Solicitor, Thames Valley Police Headquarters, Kidlington, Oxon OX5 2NX. Tel: Kidlington 4343, ext. 398.

Closing date: 13 February, 1978.

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Assistant Solicitors are required for the expanding Company and Commercial Department. It is expected that there will be three vacancies, two of which should be filled by Solicitors preferably having at least two years' experience since qualification in drafting company and commercial documents.

Salaries will be by arrangement, having regard to the age and experience of the individuals concerned, but will be not less than £6,000 per annum for those who have been qualified for two years, and not less than £4,750 per annum for a newly-qualified Solicitor.

Please reply in the first instance, enclosing a curriculum vitae, to Mr. A. D. Walker, Partnership Secretary, Richards, Butler & Co., 5 Clifton Street, London, EC2A 4DQ.

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BARGAINING FROM STRENGTH

By this point in the year, well over a third of workers in major groups have normally made their annual pay settlements. This year only about a fifth have done so. All but a handful of these—95 per cent, the Department of Employment claims—have made do with awards that fall within the Government's pay guidelines. But far more workers have thought it worthwhile to delay matters a little, to observe the fortunes first of the firm and then of other unions with greater industrial strength—in particular the miners, railwaymen and power station workers. This week, by chance, each of these groups is going through an important stage in its negotiating process: so are the tanker drivers, engineers, steelworkers, shipbuilders, gas and water workers, and civil servants.

But of all these groups, only the tanker drivers, who plan to begin an overtime ban on Wednesday, are yet near the point of deciding whether to fight for their claims. The engineering talks are about the national minimum rate, and since most workers have local agreements which pay well above the minimum, failure to agree would not lead to immediate or severe industrial action. The railwaymen and civil servants are only just beginning to bargain. The leaders of the steelworkers, whose talks resume on Wednesday, have been putting on a truculent air, but the state of their industry is such that the argument on wages is more over whether they should get as much as 10 per cent than whether they should have more.

The tanker drivers are among the industrial groups that are able to bring great pressure to bear in spite of their small size. The decision yesterday of the Shell drivers to join those employed by BP, Texaco and Esso in an overtime ban will lead quickly to petrol shortages. The effect will be inconvenient, but

need not be crippling. It should be possible to arrange alternative sources of supply, if the Government (which has already been putting quiet but energetic pressure on the employers not to capitulate) is determined to resist.

The miners and power workers are more formidable. It has become part of conventional wisdom that the miners cannot be withstood if they have set their hearts on something; the power workers are at least as essential to society, and are able to cut off supplies to the public much more rapidly. The miners are still officially committed to their 92 per cent claim, and their leaders still insist that an award substantially greater than 10 per cent will be required. But the atmosphere has changed very much since the claim was drawn up. The new productivity bonus scheme is already in action at many pits, and some face workers are earning more through the scheme than they would have done if the claim had been implemented in full. Most miners will scarcely be eager to forgo these extra earnings by going on strike now.

The satisfaction of the miners is one reason for the discontent of the power workers. No incentive bonuses to help them round the guidelines: the nature of their work limits the scope for anything of the kind. Their pay is not nearly as far ahead of the average as it was three years ago. Last November there was some unofficial action, which showed how much disruption even a relatively small number of power workers could cause; since then Mr Frank Chapple, leader of the union with the largest number of members in the industry, has taken every opportunity of reminding the country of their strength and determination.

Part of this may be put down

to an anxiety not to be outflanked in an industry where many are suspicious that the few large manual unions lack concern for their special interests. But there is no reason to doubt that the unions' negotiators will be looking for increases substantially greater than 10 per cent; the formal claim is for 30 per cent.

A settlement grossly outside the guidelines would still encourage many imitators. Some groups that have already settled might demand to have talks reopened. The danger of a destructive resumption of rapid wage inflation would be much increased. But there are practical limits to the resistance that the Government could put up. The human and economic cost of the firemen's strike was justified by the prospect of success, but there is no advantage in carrying on a conflict that cannot be won beyond that. It is necessary to remind potential imitators that only exceptional industrial strength can force a breach.

As the miners found, too great an insistence on sectional interest can tend to isolate a union even within the labour movement. Apart from some militants, the power workers may not be ready to undertake the odium of an all-out strike. The Electricity Council's offer on Thursday will be put to a ballot or to a delegate conference. Productivity still gives a margin for negotiation: even though power station employees have been cut by 40 per cent in ten years, there are many demarcation rules to be bargained over. The electrical power workers in general are not necessarily prepared to gain what would inevitably be a harsh and divisive victory over a Labour government, nor would such a victory necessarily destroy the general validity of the campaign against wage inflation.

A referendum on Scotland

From Lord Allen of Abbeydale
Sir, A footnote from experience with the EEC referendum may be of some interest in the context of the recent amendments to the Scotland Bill.

As came out in the debate, 40 per cent of the electorate is 40 per cent of a figure which cannot be precisely ascertained. Simply adding the electoral lists together does not produce an accurate result. Allowance has to be made for those who have not reached 18 on polling day; for those who have died, or emigrated, or are in the Services; and for those with two homes who are on more than one list. The leaves aside those who have moved and although still eligible to vote may in practice be unable to do so.

For the EEC referendum, we thought that the turnout in the total lists should be reduced by 2 per cent to take account of these factors, and we calculated the percentage turnout on these adjusted totals.

Yours faithfully,
ALLEN OF ABBEYDALE,
House of Lords,
January 27.

From Mr Guy Newey

Sir, The low turnout of MPs for devolution debates are again to be deplored. Only about a quarter of Members voted for the amendment which requires from the Scots a minimum referendum "yes" vote of 40 per cent.

Yours faithfully,
GUY NEWNEY,
Queen's College,
Cambridge,
January 27.

Spina bifida children

From the Bishop of Durham

Sir, The volume of recent public discussion on the proposal to start routine prenatal screening for neural tube defects is an indication of the complexity of the issue, and the strength of feeling which it arouses. I write as Chairman of an ethical working group in the North-East Region, which has already published a paper on the ethics of selective abortion, and is now looking at the ethical problems of routine screening. We hope to publish our findings in due course.

Meanwhile we are concerned about the pressures on the Department of Health and Social Security to implement proposals for nationwide screening, while scant attention has been paid to their ethical implications. Others besides ourselves have pointed out the practical risks and difficulties of setting up a national screening system, and the dubious nature of the cost benefits. Our main concern has been for those who would find unacceptable the only "treatment" offered as a result of a series of positive tests, ie, an abortion at 20 weeks or over. By applying routine screening tests indiscriminately to all, some who might not wish to be faced with that choice will have it brought appreciably nearer, and their anxieties considerably increased, if they are found to be among the 3 per cent with a positive blood test. Even if they then decide to undergo further testing, they will have been made to suffer unnecessary distress during the remainder of their pregnancy.

It seems to us that those who, for a variety of reasons, do not wish to be faced with this choice ought to have the freedom respected. We therefore hope the Department will continue to move cautiously in the matter of routine testing, to set up pilot schemes before a national policy is implemented, and to preserve the voluntary principle, preferably by a simple procedure for contracting out.

The issue is an important one, because it is the first of what may later become a series of routine prenatal tests for a wide variety of defects. The ethical choices are likely to become more complex as techniques improve.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN DUNELM,
Auckland Castle,
Convent Square,
Durham,
January 27.

'Lady Chatterley's Lover'

From Mr Bernard Nichols
Sir, May I add a postscript, as it were, to my old friend Hans Schmoller's letter of January 24.

It was the first of his printers to whom the late Sir Allen Lane offered the printing of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. To his question, had I read it, the answer was no, so he sent me a copy of the book. I have read it, and I decided it was not the kind of book my firm would be happy to print and to sell. Allen Lane accordingly. His reaction was characteristic—the capacity would be available for other Penguin books.

A year or two later we were invited by another publisher to print the unexpurgated edition of *Fanny Hill*. With the message of *Lady Chatterley's* innocence ringing loud and clear it now seemed inappropriate for a book of this kind to be what was obscene or not. So we accepted the printing of *Fanny Hill* and, in the event, the consequences of her conviction.

"Judge not that ye be not judged" or—"Judge and be judged." *Chatterley* was right.
Yours faithfully,
BERNARD NICHOLS, Chairman,
C. Nichols and Company Limited,
The Philips Park Press,
Manchester,
January 25.

Buying British

From Mr Richard Horton

Sir, While walking through town yesterday I saw a white minibus bearing the legend "Leyland Kenya Limited—Staff Bus". It was a Volkswagen.

Yours faithfully,
R. P. HORTON,
PO Box 41968,
Nairobi,
Kenya,
January 20.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Jobs for ethnic minorities

From Mr Alan Evans

Sir, Your leading article (January 27) criticising Camden Council's policy of providing ethnic minorities with equal employment opportunities makes too much of the fine distinction between "positive policies of non-discrimination" and "policies of positive discrimination." This playing with words does scant justice to the Council's intentions, as set out in the text of our policy statement.

There is no question of the Council's seeking to practise reverse discrimination against white people; we accept that this would be unlawful and undesirable. You take us to task for the wording of our paragraph 7 of the Race Relations Act: the context shows that by "discriminating positively" in the employment field to cater for the special employment needs of ethnic minority groups, we mean the provision of special recruitment and training programmes to deal positively with the needs of those who are at present severely disadvantaged. We do not mean that white employees or applicants for jobs will be subjected to some new disadvantageous selection process not apply to them. Indeed, perhaps the most sensitive and pertinent explanation of the policy came from Mr Mike Blick, a Camden member of the Nalga national executive who stated: "people interviewed for jobs with the council must bear in mind that if there are equal claims to a job then, given the imbalance, they (immigrants) will be given preference. If on every other count they are equal then this will be a determining factor."

The starting point of the policy is our agreement with the Government White Paper on Racial Discrimination (published in September 1975) that "it would be wrong to adhere so blindly to the principle of formal legal equality as to ignore the handicaps preventing many black and brown workers from obtaining equal employment opportunities." The legislation which followed the White Paper provides not only that racial minorities should be offered special training to fit them for certain jobs, but that they should be encouraged to take advantage of opportunities for doing those jobs.

This is precisely what Camden now seeks to do. By advertising in ethnic minority newspapers, by positive efforts to attract applicants from ethnic minority groups (as the

Metropolitan Police attempted to do some years ago), by helping our own interviewers to understand more of the cultural background of ethnic minorities, and by giving minority groups better opportunities for in-service training which would help them to compete equally for promotion, we are seeking to rectify the underrepresentation of ethnic minority groups at all levels in our staffing structure.

The purpose is clear: to remove some of the barriers which racial disadvantage and discrimination place in the way of black and other ethnic minorities, so as to give them the opportunity (on present terms) of competing on equal terms. Having done this, if two candidates of equal qualifications present themselves for the same post, and one of them belongs to a minority group it might well seem that the other has to be taken. Which preference should be given to that candidate? Which ever candidate we choose in these circumstances, we could be accused of discrimination; on balance, we would prefer to be criticised for attempting to redress the imbalance which now exists generally in the job market.

We are not impressed by your argument that our policy will infuriate the racists or stir up resentment among poor and uneducated white people. As far as Camden Council is concerned, it is not our practice to look nervously over our shoulder at the racists and ask whether a policy which is manifestly right and just will be acceptable to them; they will not be allowed to write our agenda for us. Your suggestion that we are seeking to deny employment to disadvantaged white people for the benefit of those from minority groups is a tendentious misrepresentation of the policy statement which Camden has adopted. The Council has already taken positive steps to help several disadvantaged groups within the boundaries of Camden, for example, disadvantaged school leavers, and we continue to promote policies which best meet the needs of its population as a whole.

Yours faithfully,
ALAN EVANS, Chairman,
Staff and Management Services Committee,
London Borough of Camden,
The Town Hall,
Euston Road, NW1,
January 30.

Sharing Holy Communion

From Canon John Austin Baker

Sir, It sometimes helps, when a debate gets stuck, to look at the problem in a different perspective. Perhaps one of the strongest reasons for intercommunion now is that withholding it imprisons Christians in a madhouse where they are so brainwashed into mistaking falsehood for truth and the temporally trivial for the eternally significant that the chances of their ever breaking out of it actually diminish rather than increase as the years pass.

First, let us look at the Christian community from a distance. Here is a body of people who have a number of unusual features in common. They all profess belief in a Triune God, Creator, Redeemer, Sanctifier; in one particular human being, Jesus of Nazareth, as the supreme revealer and agent of that God in history; in a divine spiritual power released into the world through Jesus to perfect human life; in a special collection of sacred books; in a community to which one is admitted by baptism with a particular formula of belief, and within which one receives forgiveness of sins and the hope of eternal life; and in a sacred rite, the heart of which is to say certain words, which Jesus said and to eat bread and drink wine as he did the night before he died. Almost all Christians accept this highly distinctive set of beliefs and practices and the majority of their fellow human beings do not.

In such circumstances it is hardly surprising that Christians, talk freely with one another about their common beliefs, pray together in conviction of a common spiritual power, together study their common Scriptures, and acknowledge one another, as admitted to the community through a common baptism. Does not this make it all the more strange that the one thing they will not do is to share their common sacred rite, even though the various ways in which the rite is often virtually indistinguishable?

Now look at the situation in close-up. Why do Christians refuse to come together in this rite? Allegedly because of disputes about the right way to organise and consecrate the ministers of that rite, or over detailed interpretations of their beliefs about it and other matters. But wait a minute! Here we have two Christians debarring from sharing in that rite, whose beliefs on all points are as near identical as no matter, while there are two receiving interpretation of their beliefs and of the rite and its ministers but about God, Jesus and eternal life are radically divergent. Curiouser and curiour!

No good appealing to Jesus for

an explanation. His folly was that of love and self-surrender, not that of irrationality and self-deception. Perhaps one of the strongest reasons for intercommunion now is that withholding it imprisons Christians in a madhouse where they are so brainwashed into mistaking falsehood for truth and the temporally trivial for the eternally significant that the chances of their ever breaking out of it actually diminish rather than increase as the years pass.

Yours faithfully,
J. A. BAKER,
3 Little Cloister,
Westminster Abbey, SW1,
January 29.

From Father Nicholas J. France
Sir, In this parish we had a Mass for Christian unity on the same evening as Dr Cogan preached in Westminster Cathedral. Introducing the Liturgy, I explained to those present why it was not possible for us to invite non-Roman Catholics to receive the Eucharist at that Mass. I said that the Catholic Church taught that Holy Communion expresses not only sacramental union with Christ, but also union with the Church in faith. I added that, avoiding short cuts to unity, we should suffer the pain of separation and use it as a means with prayer to further the full and final union of the churches.

I once heard an Anglican say: "How can I receive communion from you when I am not in communion with your Bishop?" This is the traditional teaching of the Christian Church and it goes back to Apostolic times. Intercommunion is a matter of essential theology, not mere Church regulations as the Archbishop of Canterbury seemed to imply last week. There is another pastoral and theological reason why I believe intercommunion is illogical. How can I welcome non-Catholics to Holy Communion when, due to a second marriage after a divorce, some of my own parishioners cannot receive the Sacrament, respecting as they do the Church's law and practice? At the same time we find that apostles to bypass the authority of our Church are pastorally unhelpful. Local ecumenism is not helped either.

Yours faithfully,
NICHOLAS J. FRANCE,
St Joseph's Presbytery,
Queen's Road,
Aldershot,
Hampshire,
January 28.

Britain's 'lie factory'

From Dr G. H. Greston

Sir, I do not know where Father Robert Graham (report, January 19) got his information about our wartime Political Warfare Executive. It was set up in 1941 and I worked for it for some four years in an active and varied capacity, which brought me in touch with almost everyone at the top level, or in the three Ministers concerned.

It is true that before it was fully established there was some freelance political warfare conducted by a few men resembling those satirised by Compton Mackenzie in *his Water on the Brain*, but the PWE stopped that sort of thing and worked on the principle that facts are the best basis for good propaganda, and that lies will not and destroy credibility, as Goebbels found to his cost in the latter stages of the war.

At one stage, when the U Boat campaign in the Atlantic was the greatest threat to the Allies, I ran a daily news bulletin directed to Latin America, consisting of factual

news of the progress of the war (as opposed to the Goebbels version to which Latin Americans were subjected). Since there was a large contingent of priests of German origin in Argentina and Brazil who tended to influence the simpler minded members of their flocks in favour of Germany, I reported any authenticated instance of Nazi hostility to the Roman Church.

One which I recall after these many years, which may not be known to Father Graham, was that the Nazis systematically closed down seminars, so that a large Catholic area of occupied France was at one time deprived of all facilities for training priests. I had this from an impeccable source and duly reported it. As for rumours or inventions, my problem was rather one of selection from the great volume of Nazi atrocities and reporting them dispassionately, so that I should avoid the impression of exaggeration. Yours faithfully,
GEORGE GREYTON,
Savage Club,
9 Fitzmaurice Place,
Berkeley Square, W1,
January 24.

Settling disputes between unions

From the General Secretary of the TUC

Sir, In his article of January 26, Mr Lyons, General Secretary of the Engineers' and Managers' Association (until recently the Electrical Power Engineers Association) gave a misleading account of the long established TUC Disputes Principles and Procedures. I do not believe that the columns of *The Times* are the place for the TUC to engage in argument with its affiliated unions, but your readers should have the facts about the TUC disputes machinery.

A careful balance has to be struck between the right of an individual to choose to be represented by a particular union and the need to establish and maintain effective negotiating arrangements. A criticism often levelled at British industrial relations is that there are too many unions in particular occupations and industries. In 1939 the Bridlington Congress adopted a series of principles designed to minimize disputes between unions over membership questions. They were drawn up because trade unionists recognized that in situations where more than one union was capable of representing a particular grade of worker, it was necessary to prevent the indiscriminate proliferation of unions if orderly and rational trade union structures and collective bargaining machinery were to be developed.

Further recommendations adopted by the Special Congress held at Croydon in 1969 gave the TUC General Council wider responsibilities concerning intervention differences between unions. The TUC dealt with 639 such disputes and there have been 289 hearings of disputes committees: the remainder were settled without the need for hearings.

It is rare for a disputes committee to be asked to settle a dispute without both parties being firmly convinced they are in the right. If either party believed itself not to be in the right, the matter would never have come before the disputes committee in the first place. The TUC system can only survive by the cooperation of all affiliated unions and it has always been accepted that it is, in the long run, in everybody's interest to accept a disputes committee decision even if it is unpopular to the union against which the award is made. The Mikardo Bill, which received its second reading in the Commons last Friday aims to ensure that the procedures of ACAS for dealing with recognition issues and the procedures of the TUC for dealing with intervention issues do not become hopelessly entangled.

Mr Lyons' article contained by implication his usual claim that the EMA are in a uniquely favourable position, compared with other TUC affiliates, to organize senior management and professional grades in industry. This is not true. The Council of Engineering Institutions shows that, in 1977, over 44 per cent of chartered engineers were trade union members. At least one third of all chartered engineers, in 1977, members of TUC affiliates, including the EMA, which accounted for one twentieth of the number.

Mr Lyons also chose to attack another TUC affiliate whose complaint about the activities of his association was upheld by an impartial disputes committee after a careful consideration of the written and oral evidence. I shall not comment on his specific references to this issue because the matter is *sui generis* as a result of unprecedented legal proceedings initiated by Mr Lyons against the TUC before his article appeared. The propriety of certain statements contained in the article may be determined elsewhere.

Yours faithfully,
LIONEL MURRAY,
General Secretary,
Trades Union Congress,
Great Russell Street, WC1,
January 30.

Burning fossil fuels

From Professor P. V. Danckwerts

Sir, You report (January 26) that I was on a burning fossil fuels in carbon dioxide produced could lead to the drowning of low lying areas.

This puts the Friends of the Earth in a nice dilemma—which it is to be, drowning or the hateful use of atomic energy?

The only way to dispose of the carbon dioxide would be to absorb it in the sea, and this would make the generation of electricity prohibitively expensive.

Yours faithfully,
PETER DANCKWERTS,
Department of Chemical Engineering,
University of Cambridge,
Pembroke Street,
Cambridge,
January 26.

Boys' papers and class

From Mr Stephen Corrin

Sir, As an avid reader of *The Magnet*, *The Gem* and all the other celebrated boys' papers I featured in the three schools, Greyfriars, St Jim's and Rookwood, must say that Reith Lecture Professor A. H. Halsey (as reported by you yesterday, January 26) talking through his hat when he says that "for working-class boys *The Magnet* and *The Gem* exalt the manners of public school boys. Most of my schoolmates were Tredegar, Mon. in those far-off days were sons of miners or other cruelly underpaid workers and we neither knew nor cared what a public school was. We read the adventures of Harry Wharton, Tom Merry and Jimmy Silver simply because they were 'ripping yarns' and allowed us to indulge in a fantasy world remote from the sort of lives we led. Exaltation of manners is nothing at all to do with it. We can't sociologists refrain from making these glib generalizations?" Yours sincerely,
STEPHEN CORRIN,
10 Russell Gardens, NW11,
January 27.

Future of Belize

From Mr A. W. M. Disney

Sir, On a visit to British Honduras (as it then was), in 1965, I was told that an agreement had been arrived at, between Britain and Guatemala, that we would construct a road tarmac road from the port of Belize to the Guatemalan frontier and that they would thereupon give up their claims to territory.

I drove the 70 odd miles from Belize to the frontier. The road was good, but then continued as an unimproved and largely broken-up tarmac road for a few miles, when it petered out altogether and became an earth track, whose only redeeming feature was the very fine Hawkesworth Bridge (named after a former governor of the colony) spanning the only considerable river on the route. As the British resident, who was my informant, remarked "no wonder the Guatemalans are peeved".

If my information was correct then, surely, the stated carrying out of this hitherto broken promise would be a small price to pay for the friendship of Guatemala and the possibility of granting independence to Belize?

Yours faithfully,
ANTHONY W. M. DISNEY,
Osney Orchard,
Chilmark,
Salisbury,
Wiltshire,
January 26.

Indian cyclone victims

From Mr Phillip Whitehead, MP

Sir, Derby North (Labour) and Mr Richard Luce, MP for Shoreham (Conservative).
Sir, We have just returned from a visit to South India and wish to make an urgent appeal to the British public to make further contributions to help the victims of the cyclone in Andhra Pradesh.
Recently in Britain we have suffered property damage from floods

and high winds. But there can be no comparison with the experience of the Indians. One tidal wave between 20ft and 30ft high swept up to 20 miles inland and in one day about 30,000 people lost their lives. Hundreds of thousands of people in the region, which traditionally has had substantial food surpluses, became destitute without shelter and with their fields ruined by salt water. This is probably the worst natural disaster in living memory in India.

A three-year rehabilitation programme is now being planned by British and other international voluntary agencies in order to provide the inhabitants with the foundations of a new agriculture and fishing industry, and proper housing.

We can testify to the excellent work being carried out on the ground by voluntary agencies such as Oxfam and Save the Children Fund. We therefore hope that people will continue to donate to the Indian Cyclone Appeal of the Disaster Emergency Committee, PO Box 999, London, in the work of rebuilding the life of this shattered area.

Yours faithfully,
PHILLIP WHITEHEAD,
RICHARD LUCE,
House of Commons,
January 25.

Founding a crafts gallery

From Professor Robert Goodden

Sir, I understand that the Greater London Council is shortly to decide what shall be built on the triangular site in front of the Victoria and Albert Museum, which was originally intended for a national theatre, but which has stood empty, except for parked cars, for many years. I am also understanding that two of the schemes submitted provide for a gallery for contemporary crafts, one offering generous floor space, the other a basement area.

May I say how much I hope the

decision at County Hall will go in favour of one of these two schemes, for nothing, to my mind, could be more appropriate than that there should be a substantial gallery in which to show the work of living craftsmen right opposite the nation's finest museum for the work of craftsmen of this and earlier generations. Such a gallery would moreover fit very well into the South Kensington educational complex.

Yours faithfully,
ROBERT GOODDEN, Chairman,
Crafts Advisory Committee,
12 Waterloo Place, SW1,
January 27.

The Blenheim Archive

From Mr Correll Barnett

Sir, While I would not of course presume to compete with Lord Eccles's expertise in matters archival and historical, nor with his evidently detailed first-hand knowledge of the contents of the Blenheim Archive, I must beg leave to state that his quoted remark in your issue of January 26 that the Churchill College Archives Centre could not handle a collection of the size of the Blenheim Archive is quite unwarranted.

Having myself carried out research in the Blenheim Archive while it was still at Blenheim Palace, I can say that the quantity, physical condition and present order of its contents are such as to present us with no insuperable problem. We are after all one of the very few purpose-built and equipped modern archives centres in the United Kingdom, and to possess a collection of some 350 boxes would be nothing novel for us. Cannot the British Library make a case without maligning others?

Yours faithfully,
CORRELL BARNETT,
Keeper of the Archives,
Churchill College,
Cambridge,
January 28.

HONGKONG

a Special Report

Peking finds favour

Richard Hughes

Hong Kong enters the 1978 of the Horse in an ally anti-British and pro-Peking mood. The former colony—that six-letter word is not there now—is reacting with characteristic resolution and resilience to the car in textile exports, with consequent unemployment, imposed by the people.

Economic community, which Britain is led for having incited encouraged. General number of Commerce has had for cooperation to the best of a bad and for diversification of industries, products and markets. The China Morning Post's "hard work, not self-local unions—Communist and Kuomintang—rallying independently to find temporary for the vanguard of textile workers, perhaps the original date of 10,000 was alive.

once again in Hong Kong there has been a Chinese reaction, which has nothing to do with communism or colonialism. The unofficial but usually rewarding tripartite pact between Peking, the British and Hong Kong is, as expected, still in the process of emerging as a possible problem.

Mr. Chang reiterated by his recent visit to Peking that China would accept Hong Kong's vital as a borrowed place, I also pledged that China would continue to ensure adequate supply of food, especially food products to Hong Kong, and did not take the initiative to raise prices.

be extension of the term of his government for Sir Ray Maclehoise was a

wise and indeed essential decision. He knows and understands the Chinese, who also approve of his long-range policies in the difficult areas of labour, industrial development and social reform. Another extension of his administration until the end of 1979 is taken for granted. What would be a mistake would be the political appointment of an old and faithful House of Commons party hack.

The Governor's surprise amnesty for corruption offences committed before January 1, 1977, in the wake of public and particularly Chinese opinion said in effect that the amnesty was fair but any further concessions would result in anarchy and should on no account be given.

"I am quite satisfied that the Independent Commission Against Corruption has emerged from this with sufficient latitude and strength to do the job it was created for: to rid the public service of the now comparatively small but corrupt former corrupt who remain, and who will not or cannot adjust to new ways, and to keep public life acceptably clean.

"So for the future of the ICAC and the importance of its operation I have no fear."

China's shrewd investment in Hong Kong persists. The new emporium of the China Products Company, which is the same size as the National Products Store in Peking and the principal department store in Shanghai—was only one of the major local investments last year.

Concurrently, another China-backed undertaking, Yiu Lan Machinery Repairs Work, is negotiating the purchase of an additional 1,200,000 sq ft of sacred Chinese soil on the Hong Kong island of Tsing Yi for construction of Hong Kong's largest shipyard. Already a 130,000 sq ft shipyard is operated on the same island by another Chinese corporation, flanked by two humbler United States shipyards.

Hong Kong has become an essential base for Chinese defence against systematic expansion of Soviet shipping in the Pacific. Up to 70 per cent of Chinese exports in particular excluded the hard-core of culprits already under investigation. It was rejected by the hard-core because so many of them did not benefit. The hard-core then played upon the emotions and sympathy of

large numbers of officers. They threatened progressive non-enforcement of the law till a total amnesty was given. There could be no question of the Government agreeing to anything of the sort, nor do I believe they were supported by the vast majority of the police.

In any case, since the Government's determination to stand firm was known, public support was so massive that those of the police who had wished to hold out wisely threw in their hand. This overwhelming upsurge of public and particularly Chinese opinion said in effect that the amnesty was fair but any further concessions would result in anarchy and should on no account be given.

"I am quite satisfied that the Independent Commission Against Corruption has emerged from this with sufficient latitude and strength to do the job it was created for: to rid the public service of the now comparatively small but corrupt former corrupt who remain, and who will not or cannot adjust to new ways, and to keep public life acceptably clean.

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twins from a distance. Peking is now buying second-hand ships from foreign countries through Chinese agents who operate out of London—13 bulk carriers and freighters in recent months.

Hong Kong Chinese regularly and increasingly visit Kwangtung. In the five years ended 1976, nearly four million Chinese crossed the border and returned to Hong Kong. In 1976 the total was 800,000 in both directions—an increase of nearly 20 per cent over 1975. Figures for 1977 were even higher, although not yet computed.

None of them wants to stay there. After all, apart from the decadent attractions of life in Hong Kong, even in restaurant areas, the average industrial worker in China earns about \$US360 a year, compared with his Hong Kong counterpart's \$US1,400. The Chinese worker is now receiving anti-Gang-of-Four wage increases and at least escapes the shadow of the EEC sword.

Also, in 1971-72, Hong Kong Chinese received approximately 10 million letters and parcels from China; in 1975-76 the total was more than 20 million. Hong Kong residents certainly know what goes on inside China.

That is one of the reasons why Hong Kong remains the best watching-window on events in the mainland.

Finally, Hong Kong has become a key centre for China's growing tourist traffic. The current edition of the Peking-published magazine, China Reconstructions (to be published next month in German, French, Spanish, Russian and Arabic), advises tourists to apply for entry visas through all local China travel agencies, which will pass their applications to the nearest Chinese embassies or consulates.

Tourist trips through Hong Kong to Canton and even Peking by passengers on cruise ships, some of which are now being allowed to anchor in Canton and Shanghai, are steadily expanding. Seven-day tours to Peking for tourists and residents with British passports now cost only \$HK4,900 (about £550). This covers air fare, first-class accommodation, meals, sightseeing and visa fees, but, alas, not yet any gambling or old-style Shanghai night-club entertainment.



Appearances belie insecurity

by Derek Davies

Hong Kong, in common with other industrialized, export-oriented economies of Asia, is suffering from a deep sense of worried insecurity. The rulelessness with which the EEC (Britain providing one of the loudest protectionist voices) cut back quotas on the colony's sales of textiles to Europe has aroused fears that the region's other important markets, the United States, will follow suit.

With the Fraser Government's recent decision to restrict Japan's access to its doors to those (like the United States and Europe) with the most economic muscle, prospects are not good for small Asian countries which have won a fairly high level of prosperity by selling manufactured goods to the rich nations.

Nevertheless, it is difficult to persuade the casual visitor to Hong Kong that it suffers from any deep-seated economic worries. During the summer, when almost rainless summer and now during the chillier days of winter, the urban centres of Victoria City and Kowloon have been bustling with activity.

Earthmovers fill the air with swirling dust and continuous din, building earth-shaking underground caverns for the new underground railway. All around, older buildings are being razed to be quickly replaced by glass-and-concrete. Last July the Government almost casually announced that it proposed to go ahead with an extension to the initial stage of the underground railway at a cost of \$HK5,000m (£558m) bringing the total cost to be paid for the 16-mile system to more than \$HK11,000m.

The frenetic rate of construction is not confined to the underground railway and central office blocks. After three years of reduced capital spending, there is under way to make up for time lost. Public housing heads the list of present and long-term priorities. But capital expenditure, up nearly 49 per cent in the 1977-78 budget, is also building schools, hospitals, clinics, technical schools and improving the crowded road system.

A battery of desalinization plants promises relief to a community again suffering from water rationing. China Light is planning a new power generator and distribution system which will cost an estimated \$HK8,400m, which puts it, as a project in the same price range as the whole underground railway.

Earlier this month it was announced that a group of British companies had won a £100m contract for a dual-fired oil and coal burning power station with China Light and Eastern Energy, a subsidiary of Exxon Corporation. It is the biggest overseas contract ever won by the British power generation industry.

the western harbour area, is being heavily developed, forming the site for 10 industrial plants, representing big investments from China, the United States, Britain and local interests.

A road tunnel has been driven through the mountains of Hong Kong Island and a second road tunnel has pierced the Lion Rock hills separating the Kowloon peninsula from the developing New Territories. In the private sector, rising rents have resulted in an increase in apartment block building. The Jockey Club has completed a huge ocean park,

featuring aquariums, dolphin displays and zoological gardens, and is building a second racecourse on reclaimed land in the New Territories.

Employment in the construction industry as a whole is 32 per cent higher than a year ago and wages have risen by more than 16 per cent.

The shape of Hong Kong's economy is shifting, both as a result of external pressures and as a process of natural growth. Tertiary industries are growing and the financial services sector (including financing, insurance, real estate and business services) now accounts for well over one fifth of the gross domestic product (compared with 27 per cent for manufacturing, which employs perhaps 15 times as many people).

Financial services thus provide a very much higher per capita output, an obvious pointer to future development. Hong Kong's rise as an international finance centre is reflected in the fact that loans granted abroad now account for well over 30 per cent of the total loans and advances of the commercial banking system, not including the growing number of offshore loans arranged by local merchant banks.

However, all this vibrant activity obscures some worrying trends. Although the overall unemployment rate in March was down to 4.5 per cent (of a total labour force of about 1,900,000), the number of those working in factories has fallen. Overall economic activity slowed in 1977 because of a decline in textile and clothing exports.

This picture contrasts sharply with the untarnished successes of 1976, when Hong Kong's gross domestic product registered 16.2 per cent growth in real terms—the highest since 1965. The value of domestic exports rose by 43 per cent, industrial employment went up by 14 per cent, while the inflation rate was held down to about 4 per cent.

It was to be expected that the recovery rate would slow down, but at the beginning of 1977 the Government was forecasting a real growth rate of between 6 and 8 per cent—and an average of 6 per cent for the rest of the decade. Final figures for 1977 are not yet available but it is very doubtful that the year's target was reached.

Andries are centred on the textile industry which, year after year, has accounted for about 50 per cent of Hong Kong's total exports. Over the 12 months from July 1976 domestic exports totalled more than \$HK33,600m, more than 20 per cent up on the previous 12 months.

However, the growth rate in the first half of 1977 dropped to 6.6 per cent, only 1 per cent of which was because of volume increase and the other 5.6 per cent being the result of higher export prices.

The main reason for this undercharacteristically dull performance has been a drop in demand from Hong Kong's biggest markets. In contrast to this unsatisfactory performance, Hong Kong's leading industry, however, there has been a strong growth in other industries—particularly electronics, watches and toys. Some of Hong Kong's most up-to-date factories are turning out computer components, a sector in which skilled labour is scarce and wages have risen by more than 20 per cent.

Sales of more advanced radios are strong, although Hong Kong has not broken into television manufacture. Electronic calculators have boomed (and with wigs and jeans before them) are now declining, the slack being taken up by the manufacture of television games such as electronic table tennis.

The watch industry is doing well, already making digital and analogue quartz watches. Hong Kong has long been the largest toy exporter. If it were not for the sad state of the textile industry, there would be little to worry about.

The axe fell when, after bitter autumn negotiations in Brussels, the EEC forced Hong Kong and then other Asian textile producers to accept quotas which represented deep cut-backs from past performances in the most profitable categories.

Europe's blow was in fact not that severe, but the fear was that the Europeans had established a precedent which could lead to similar treatment in the markets of North America, Japan and Australia, to anarchy in international commerce and to a global trade war in which free ports such as Hong Kong would be the first to go under.

London's attitude has not only created uncertainty but

a sense of isolation—for Hong Kong as a free port has no bargaining power in such international wheeling and dealing and must rely on Britain to protect its interests.

Hong Kong's construction boom and the decision to extend the underground railway also have disturbing implications for an economy which relies mainly on exporting. The 32 per cent growth of the labour force employed in the construction industry indicates that it is taking workers displaced from factories while the numbers of those employed by banks, restaurants and other service and non-manufacturing sectors are also growing.

This is the first time that a construction boom in Hong Kong has been accompanied by a decline in domestic exports. This means that Hong Kong's proudly advertised system, in which market forces are supposed to bring about automatic adjustments to the economy, has been temporarily frustrated—raising the spectre of internally-generated inflation.

China's investments in Hong Kong continue to grow. They include 13 banks (four incorporated in Hong Kong), six big department stores and more than 70 smaller retail outlets, three commercial and distributing agencies, six warehouses and cold storage facilities, four insurance companies, seven investment companies, oil and petrol storage and distribution facilities, and two factories making monosodium glutamate and cigarettes. A dockyard with one of the world's biggest floating drydocks and a large machine tool factory are under construction.

The value of these investments to China is impossible to calculate with accuracy, but is conservatively estimated to be well over \$US2,000m in cash.

If, as expected, China's new ventures bring not only stability but a determination to realize Chou En-lai's dream of making the country a modern industrialized state by the end of the century, these foreign exchange earnings will be a significant contribution to Peking's ability to buy needed foreign technology and plant.

The author is editor, Far Eastern Economic Review.

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Hong Kong is a place that radiates confidence. The facts speak for themselves. In 1976 Hong Kong's external trade reached a record value of £10,347 million, an increase of 34% over 1975. Hong Kong's achievements in world trading are well known, but few realize that Hong Kong is entirely dependant on imports to meet the insatiable appetite of its industry and people.

Hong Kong with a land area of about the same size as Greater London and with a population of 4.4 million is a marketing man's dream — it's compact, it's sophisticated and there's plenty of spending power. Over half the population is under 24.

Last year Hong Kong's imports were valued at \$5,400 million, representing raw materials, food stuffs, machinery and consumer products. This is the Hong Kong market — a growing market endorsed by the confidence of the industry and Government.

The Government's continued investment in Hong Kong is far-reaching and far-sighted. Major projects in hand include a new mass transit railway system, the world's largest desalination plant and a staggering \$2,125 million investment in New Town projects linked to a series of new industrial estates.

This confidence by the Government is endorsed by overseas investment, particularly in the manufacturing industries. Total overseas investment in this field stood at £250 million in May 1977. This figure does not include the many joint ventures with local companies. Britain, Japan and the U.S.A. are Hong Kong's largest investors, establishing a total of 227 factories.

Investment in Hong Kong offers many advantages not available elsewhere in the world: low taxation, a minimum of red tape, well developed banking and communications services, excellent labour relations, an adaptable and well trained work-force, modern industrial sites and buildings and perhaps most important of all, no restrictions on repatriation of profits.

HONG KONG
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Finance

Time on their side

by a Special Correspondent

News that Chase Manhattan Bank has centralized its Asia and Australasia operations in Hongkong well illustrates the colony's growing international financial importance. Another of the United States Big Six banks, Morgan Guaranty Trust, has recently opened a branch in Hongkong to take over its Taiwan and Philippines business from Singapore—yet further evidence of Hongkong's continuing attraction as a regional financial centre.

Its role is summarized by one leading banker who said: "Singapore raises the money, Hongkong finds the outlets."

The absence of foreign exchange controls, low taxation, a sound economy and excellent communications have attracted about 40 foreign banks with 306 branches to open offices in Hongkong, and no doubt the number will continue to rise, along with the number of foreign bank representative offices, of which there are about a hundred.

The local financial market diversified further in 1977 with the issuing of some \$HK780m (about £88m) in 1977. This confident expansion reflects the leading

issue for the new railway is expected this year. The Hongkong and Shanghai Bank's merchant banking arm, Wardley, and Chase Manhattan Asia both issued Hongkong dollar certificates of deposits, the first since the Slater Walker/Hutchison issue is second to none.

The Hongkong dollar, which in 1976 was the world's third strongest currency, behind the Swiss franc and the West German mark, fared less well in 1977, maintaining its level with the depreciating United States dollar but falling 20 per cent against the Japanese yen.

Local best lending rate was cut twice last year and now stands at 4.75 per cent compared with 6 per cent at the start of 1977. In an unusual lack of unanimity, Chartered Bank did not immediately cut its deposit rate when the giant Hongkong and Shanghai Bank, which is seen as the unofficial central bank because it dwarfs other institutions, cut its rates in April. However, unity was subsequently restored, on the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank's terms.

The gold market celebrated its move in July to a new 16-storey home with \$HK780m (about £88m) in 1977. This confident expansion reflects the leading

position Hongkong has firmly established for itself in the international gold market. Only the London and Zurich exchanges are busier. And on an active day in Hongkong, where over a million ounces, worth \$US170m, change hands, it is second to none.

With its advantageous place in the international time-clock—trading while Europe and North America are asleep—Hongkong's gold market can set the rates for the day's trading in the rest of the world.

This is particularly important after the five-weekly International Monetary Fund's gold auction, the results of which are announced at the end of the day in Washington. Hongkong is the first market to start trading after the results and its reaction is a barometer that European dealers eagerly check when they start business the next day.

Confirming the local market's eminence in the world gold trade, more and more North American and European firms are establishing offices in Hongkong, while in Western Europe, dealers now work two shifts a day, starting at 7 am GMT, so they can get their daily indicator from Hongkong as early as possible.

The precious metals market will expand in February

when trading in silver returns to the premises of the Chinese Gold and Silver Exchange Society for the first time since the end of the Second World War.

Another expansion of Hongkong's role in the international commodity market place, which takes advantage of its position in the world's clock, occurred with the opening in May of the Hongkong Commodity Exchange.

North American, Japanese and European business houses are well represented at the exchange, which started life trading in raw cotton and in November added sugar to its list.

Taking a lead from the gold exchange, it has changed its business hours so that cotton traders from Liverpool and Switzerland, and subsequently sugar brokers from all over Western Europe, can start their trading day in Hongkong before the end of the oriental day.

In recent years Hongkong's four stock exchanges have been among the most volatile in the world, but in 1977 they barely moved and turnover more than halved to a daily average of \$HK24,900,000. All year the Hang Seng index, which measures share prices, fluctuated narrowly, touching a peak of 452 points and a low of 402.

With other markets competing for funds and the prospect of protectionist textile export agreements being imposed by Europe

and North America overhauling the leading industry's future, many investors shied away from the dull stock markets.

A leading brokerage house dubbed 1977 as the year of uncertainty and, optimistically, 1978 as the year of expectation. Fresh hope has come with the news that Britain has freed its investors from the "25 per cent surrender rule" from January 1.

As a step in the path of rationalization, an exchange dealing started in August and 1980 has been set as the likely date for unification of the four stock exchanges.

Before then the Hongkong Government hopes it will have done much to improve the international image of its stock markets with legislation for a tighter company takeover code and, more important, a tribunal to investigate insider share dealing.

Reports of people using their privileged inside information to make a quick profit are not unusual in Hongkong, but they do not seem to worry some of the community's more insular members. Nor does the proposed insider trading legislation, which will investigate malpractices but will not punish them with the criminal law.

Exposure to public opinion will be the only sanction in the new legislation, but this may well prove inadequate and the Government has said time will tell if more stringent measures are necessary or practicable.

Foreign trade

Flexibility to the rescue

by Lesley Nelson

Hongkong's foreign trade was worth \$HK3,018m in the first 10 months of last year, almost twice the value of the gross domestic product and making the colony, with about 4,500,000 people, one of the world's top 30 trading nations.

Because international trade forms so dominant a part of the economy, and the colony's continued existence depends on its economic viability for Britain and China as well as for the local population, the phrase "export or die" has a literal meaning.

For this reason, the past year has been worrying for Hongkong, as fears have mounted and been realized about restrictions in overseas markets against its textile exports. In addition, the world's leading clothing exporter found that in the first 10 months of 1977 exports totalled \$11,048m, down 6 per cent on the same period of 1976. Textile yarn and fabric exports also decreased, to \$2,136m, a fall of 16 per cent.

Despite this dismal news, total domestic export in the first 10 months rose by 6 per cent over the same period of 1976, mainly as a result of improvements in sales of electronics and toys, but also as a result of gains in metal manufacturing, hand and machine tools, jewelry and plastics, the last of which grew 38 per cent in export value in the first nine months of 1977. So it looks as though once confidence that manu-

facturers will respond automatically to changing economic circumstances is not shared by all. Last year Mr. Hilton Cheong-leen, a Legislative Councillor, said he was disturbed by the Financial Secretary's blithe statement that the consistently higher growth rates of South Korea and Taiwan in the export of manufactured goods were not necessarily cause for concern. He pointed out that Hongkong's exports to the United States rose 56 per cent in 1976, compared with 83.5 per cent by South Korea and 69.5 per cent by Taiwan.

In addition, he noted, between 1971 and 1976 Hongkong had dropped from second among Asian exporters to the United States to fifth behind Japan, Taiwan, Indonesia and South Korea.

The toy industry's main concern at present is local labour, with wages rising, both direct and indirect, the latter in the form of better holidays and conditions being enforced through legislation. There is also the general difficulty of lack of design skill, except in a handful of big firms, and original engineering ability.

Design is important not merely because Hongkong is faced with growing competition from Asian neighbours and must therefore keep one step ahead, but because it represents significant value added.

Hongkong is well off in its quota allocations, which is why a number of developing countries in South-east Asia, where "significant economic growth" would take place in the near future, are paying off, with January-October exports up 19 per cent to \$1,151m and those to Africa (notably Nigeria) up 14 per cent to \$1,209m.

A Grindlays Bank analysis has emphasized that as greater liberalization among Hongkong's major customers was unlikely to occur, an increasingly important determinant of the colony's economic performance would be diversification, both geographically and in product range.

It suggested that consumer durables were a still largely unexplored area possessing considerable potential. Manufacturers responded a

few years ago to the upsurge in demand for wigs. In some countries there would have been major upheavals as demand slackened, but in Hongkong factory managers were left to diversify into new lines.

Similarly, they seized the opportunity offered by the upheavals in the watch industry, and have become major producers of electronic digital watches, which make up about 4 per cent of domestic exports.

More recently, and on a smaller scale, there has been considerable local publicity to Hongkong's efforts to expand its share of the American smoke detector market.

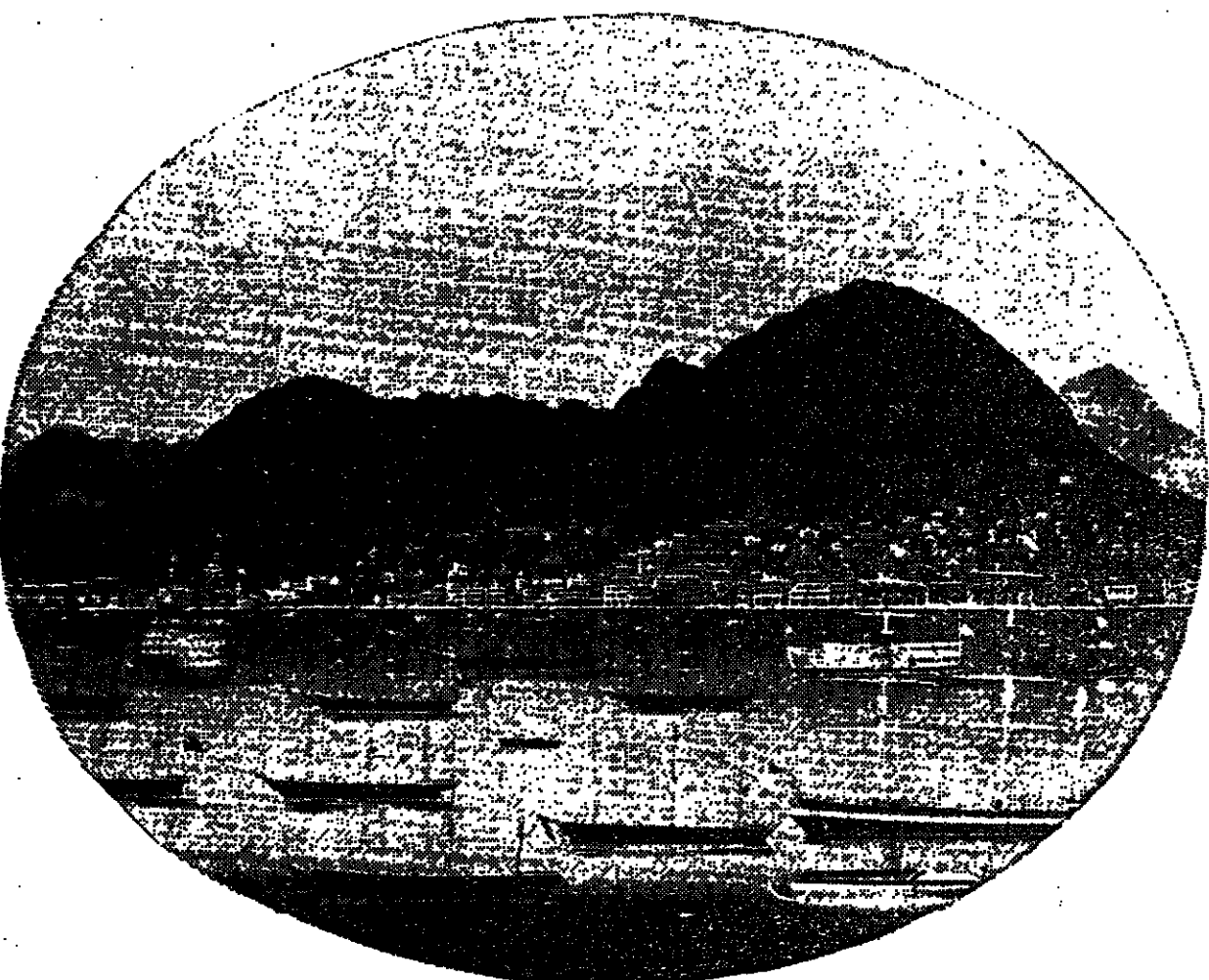
North America and Western Europe account for more than two thirds of all exports, but the government-backed Trade Development Council is trying to open up other areas. Asia—the main source of imports, particularly China (18 per cent) for food and Japan (22 per cent) for textile industry and raw materials—is the next most important region, buying \$3,304m worth of Hongkong goods in the first half of this year (up 10 per cent).

The Commissioner of the Export Credit Insurance Corporation has said that efforts should be made to develop markets in South-east Asia, where "significant economic growth" would take place in the near future.

The TDC has devoted much effort to "seeding" East Europe, a politically touchy area. China's distrust of the Soviet bloc, and although in absolute terms exports amounted to only \$100m in the January-June period, that represents an 8 per cent rise.

Efforts in the Middle East, too, are paying off, with January-October exports up 19 per cent to \$1,151m and those to Africa (notably Nigeria) up 14 per cent to \$1,209m.

There is no reason to suppose such skill will not be developed, however, for Hongkong's industrialists are good at responding to new circumstances. In television games, for example, manufacturers spotted the trend and moved in quickly, often ditching their declining calculator lines—just as manufacturers responded a



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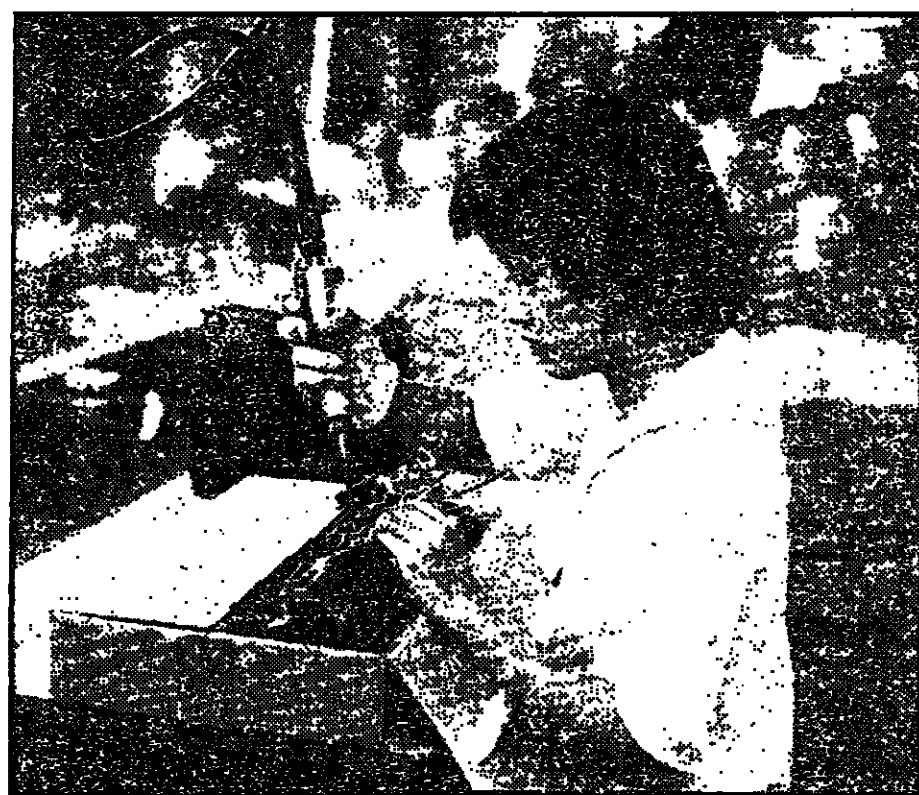
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Electronics, an industry faced with stiff competition from other Asian countries.

Electronics

Successful but tense

by Dinah Lee

The Hongkong electronics industry, second in size only to textiles, increased the value of exports by almost 20 per cent in 1977, according to provisional figures. The industry's export earnings in the first 10 months amounted to \$HK3,950m.

But no one manufacturing electronic goods—an eclectic pursuit covering digital watches, television games, calculators, transistor radios, integrated circuits, radio transmitter-receivers and even automatic air fresheners in lemon, strawberry and orange—can afford to relax.

Although the local electronics industry has been envied in the past for its remarkable flexibility, mere quick-change artistry may not be able to solve the problems that Hongkong industrialists face.

Other countries with supplies of cheap labour, notably Taiwan and South Korea, are already on Hongkong's heels. New competitors like Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand, are catching up fast as they play the

old game of copying expensive designs for mass production. Both the Philippines and Indonesia are expected to enter the industry before the end of the decade.

Industrialists complain that without overall Hongkong government assistance in planning, and with a noticeable relaxation of government encouragement of labour-intensive industries, electronics may fall behind.

Mr Cecil Chan, the executive director of the Federation of Hongkong Industries, said at a recent bankers' meeting: "If we understand the intense competition in the market, and the obstacles to future development, and devise plans to overcome them, our electronics industry has a bright future."

Although the territory has 700 electronics factories and more than 70,000 workers, there are few inventive minds in the industry. Hongkong is not fertile ground for designers, and yet the solution to the problem would seem to be the development of new designs, particularly for television, games, electronic toys, kitchen appliances, or home security systems.

Already television games, produced by some 24 firms, have shown signs of overproduction after a one-year boom, and a levelling off is expected this year.

Leaders in the games business, Radofin Electronics (Far East), are a good example of the durability of some of the leading firms.

Radofin once led the market in calculators, its only product until September 1976. While scores of other firms cashed in on the calculator boom, Radofin had already foreseen its end and had begun games production. By December 1976 seven other firms were in business.

Besides extending the market with programmable games and more varied player movements, Radofin moved into printer calculators last year. It is expected that about half a dozen firms will have joined them shortly in producing these machines which print out calculations.

It takes an expert eye and an international business sense to keep up with the trends. The calculator, hailed as the marvel of 1974, showed a 56 per cent

decline in exports in the first half of last year.

Since calculators share a similar technology with electronic games and digital watches, many calculator manufacturers are switching to games. Digital watches are not included in the electronics trade statistics since they fall into the watches category, but it is estimated that they accounted for roughly \$500m of exports in 1976.

Hongkong boasts the thinnest liquid crystal display watch in the world.

Radios are still the largest electronic export. Production totalled \$4,021m in 1976, with an increase in transistor sets in the first 10 months of 1977 of 10 per cent. The total value of transistor exports in 1976 was 37 per cent above the depressed level of 1975.

Total sales of radios of all kinds in the first 10 months of last year are estimated at \$1,504m with a big increase in the output of cassette machines expected.

New regulations in the United States changing the Citizen's Band radio frequency requirements from 27 to 49 megahertz brought an unexpected bonus. This means that every "CB enthusiast" in the United States will have to buy a new set.

But, even given the readings of manufacturers to adept production, the cost of labour and space remains an acute and worsening problem. Manufacturers claim that the supply of skilled workers has run out. Skilled young women prefer clothing factories where piece-rates are paid. Wages in the radio industry have risen to about \$6 a day with extras.

Wage costs mean that Hongkong factories must produce more advanced products, as they can no longer compete with Taiwan and South Korea in providing cheap labour. Even local manufacturers are moving out of the territory. Despite political risks in Thailand and the interventionist tendencies of the Malaysian and Singapore Governments, these countries still hold an attraction.

Hongkong's workforce is too fickle, some say, and one firm moved its operation out of the territory. Despite these women workers were more faithful.

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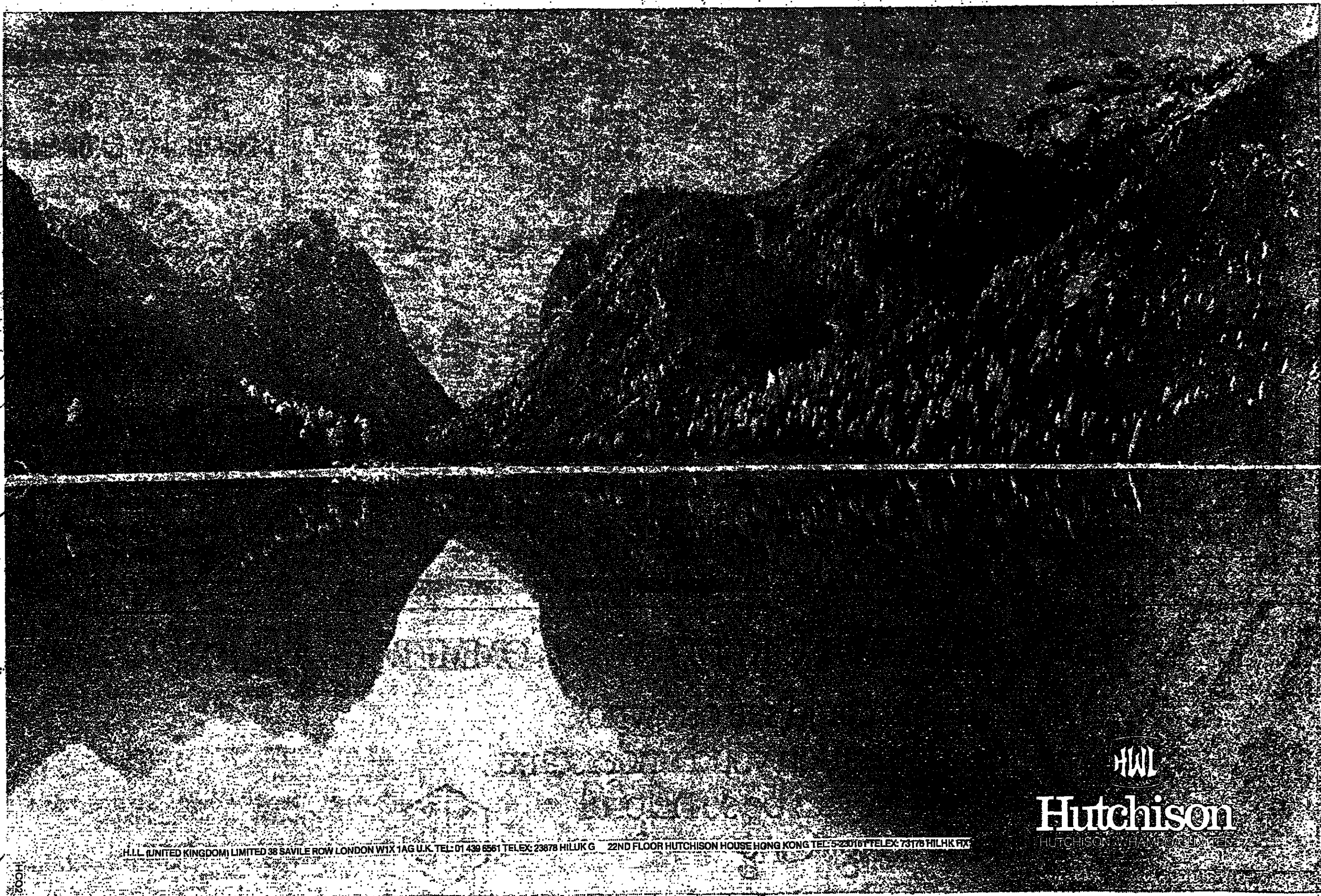
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In today's competitive commercial environment mergers and takeovers are often messy. The consequence of the event can have adverse effects both on commercial performance and corporate unity . . . a situation we were determined to avoid. In forming Hutchison Whampoa Limited, the Boards of both Hongkong and Whampoa Dock Company Limited and Hutchison International Limited had long established a firm and well developed working relationship. It was a natural conclusion to bring together our resources, giving us total net assets of over US\$669 million and to fully optimize the prime strengths in all areas of both organizations.

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Textiles

Industry faces major challenge

by Ann Fish

The year 1977 will go down in Hongkong as one in which protectionist pressures in the colony's major markets caused deep unease in the burgeoning garment industry.

The results of those pressures, in the form of the new bilateral agreement with the EEC and growing constraints in other countries, can only be a major challenge to an industry that has enjoyed unprecedented growth in recent years.

The agreement initiated in Brussels on December 3 will last for five years, during which most of Hongkong's garment exports to the Nine will be strictly controlled, or in some cases cut right back.

For 1978, the bilateral agreement effectively limits garment sales in most categories to the relatively depressed levels of 1976. The exceptions will be so-called sensitive products such as women's shirts, cotton fabrics, woven trousers and shorts and knitted briefs, which are cut back an estimated 8 per cent to 22 per cent on 1976 export levels.

For 1979 and later years, the growth rate permitted for individual categories varies between 0.25 per cent and 8.5 per cent.

Whether the EEC's success in restraining its textile imports from Hongkong and other Asian countries will tempt the United States to tear up its own bilateral agreement with the colony and succumb to the pressures from its own hard-pressed textile sector to limit imports remains to be seen.

Canada's decision to extend its global quota sys-

tem (brought in on November 30, 1976) until December 31, came as a further blow to Hongkong. The quotas cover 90 per cent of its imports from the colony, and their introduction was responsible for a 33 per cent fall in the value of Hongkong's clothing exports to Canada between January and October 1977. Canada aims to negotiate bilateral agreements with exporting countries.

Negotiations with Norway and Sweden broke down late in 1977 when Hongkong refused to accept cutbacks as high as 70 per cent in some categories and a new agreement has yet to be made. Both countries are major importers.

In Australia and New Zealand, Hongkong's clothing exports continued to decline in 1977. New Zealand has maintained strict import controls and Australia has further tightened its global quota system.

Despite these difficulties in important markets, however, many Hongkong businessmen feel that efforts to raise quality, diversify into less sensitive products and find new markets are paying off.

They believe that the net effect of garment constraints in some areas will not be too deleterious on the industry as a whole.

The chairman of the Government's Trade Development Council, Mr. T. K. Ann, said that although the effects of 1977 had caused some buyer hesitation, he felt overall textile and garment exports for 1978 would exceed 1977 levels. Several other industry leaders agreed, suggesting that while the new EEC bilateral pact was harsh it was by no means catastrophic.

Leading Hongkong's drive to diversify its markets and

produce higher-quality garments has been the annual Ready-to-Wear Festival, organized by the council and the leading manufacturers.

The 1978 festival (January 21-27) attracted well over 4,000 buyers, including almost 1,000 from the United States, according to a council spokesman.

In 1957 Hongkong's first Ready-to-Wear Festival attracted only 250 buyers and 79 participants. Eight years later, however, the colony demonstrated great resilience during the worldwide recession by achieving an impressive export growth and replacing Italy as the largest exporter of clothing.

In 1976, Hongkong's clothing industry increased its export value by 40 per cent, the biggest rise for 15 years. Participation in the festival rose from 98 to 158, and the total buyer attention exceeded 3,100—a 111 per cent increase over 1975.

The two largest contingents came from Japan and the United States; there were also sizable groups of buyers from West Germany, Britain, Australia, Canada, Arabia, Spain, Surinam, Saudi Arabia, and several others.

With increasing restrictions in major overseas markets and keen competition, particularly from South Korea and Taiwan, Hongkong manufacturers and exporters are aware of the need to "trade up" their products—produce higher quality, more fashionable clothing that would be less affected by trade barriers in importing countries—and search out new markets.

This was well demonstrated at the 1977 festival which attracted more than 4,000 buyers from 46 countries, with 190 local manufacturers participating.

In an effort to woo the

upper end of the market there were for the first time specialty shows for manufacturers and designers of sweaters, leather and luxury furs, and a coordinates show featuring complete ensembles matched for colour, fabric and style.

In addition, a young designers' show was introduced for the first time—not only to encourage emerging talent but to provide designers with much-needed exposure to local manufacturers, overseas buyers and fashion editors.

It is estimated that about 90 per cent of the clothing industry's production goes to overseas markets. It is also the largest manufacturing industry in Hongkong and an important foreign exchange earner. In December 1976, there were more than 8,000 establishments in the industry employing more than 265,000 workers.

Continuing efforts to improve labour conditions for Hongkong's 1,500,000 workers are a constant difficulty for local manufacturers, who fear the added costs will undermine their competitiveness. Higher wages and seven days paid annual leave (until from around the world) are a constant difficulty for local manufacturers, who fear the added costs will undermine their competitiveness.

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a factory in Spain in the belief that it would be easier to break into the French market from there than from Hongkong.

Though few would suggest Hongkong workers are coddled, they are in the unique position of being able to pick and choose their employment, and many employers are looking for ways and means of attracting and keeping skilled labour.

Many factories work a five and half day week and provide free lunches for employees. One fashion house gives employees incentive bonuses. Added to the employees' annual bonuses and overtime, this can often bring the wage up to the same as, if not more than, their United States counterparts. This company is also contemplating the idea of paying for skilled workers to attend night school.

The 1977 Ready-to-Wear Festival was attended for the first time by delegates from the United Arab Emirates and Hongkong's exports to the UAE for the first 10 months of 1977 showed a growth of 50 per cent to HK\$116.4m.

Sales to the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe have risen. However, trade with the Soviet bloc countries is difficult because of the lack of hard currency.

Despite the obvious obstacles facing manufacturers, Hongkong should still be able to maintain its position as a leading clothing exporter of quality and fashionable clothing at competitive prices. Its industrial workforce, resourceful management and ability to adapt itself quickly to changing trends and overseas demand is well known. It has the added advantage of free trading, excellent banking facilities and little government intervention.

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Narcotics

Steady progress

by Lesley Nelson

One of Hongkong's major industries never shows up in the trade statistics. This is narcotics, on which the colony's own addicts spend an estimated HK\$700m a year, to say nothing of the amounts which pass through the city state on the way to Europe and the United States.

Hongkong's reputation as a narcotics centre, however, is exaggerated by the myth that all Chinese come from Hongkong, and by the long name for heroin in Europe, Chinese rocks. Sometimes even Hongkong rocks.

The colony is an important transit point, so the customs and police have to play their part in smashing the international flow of narcotics, as well as stemming the flow of drugs entering the colony for internal use in order to push up prices, which discourages young people from taking up the habit. The price of number 3 heroin has risen 200 per cent in two and a half years to HK\$50,000 (£5,580) a kilogram wholesale. Mr. Jack Johnston, of the Narcotics Bureau, says the indications are that in the past three years the number of addicts in Hongkong has not increased and that the number of people under 21 known to be involved is decreasing. Of addicts admitted to the prisons department treatment centres in 1976 only 9.37 per cent were under 21, compared with 25.4 per cent in 1969. And only 4 per cent of admissions to Shek Kwu Chan, the colony's largest voluntary inpatient treatment centre, were under 19 in 1976, compared with 12.7 per cent in 1969.

There are a number of factors for this, apart from

more efficient enforcement. In most Western countries many addicts are young people with cash to spend and looking for kicks. The addict's profile here is of a semi-skilled or unskilled labourer, over 21, with little or no education and living in poor housing.

A lot of them obviously went into drugs for social reasons," Mr. Johnston says, "to get away from the pressures of daily life. But over the past few years the quality of the life of the man in the street has improved immensely—better working conditions, holidays, housing, transport and recreation facilities. The young people in particular go to the hills around Hongkong, go picnicking, take up sport, so that they do not need to turn to drugs to get away from their environment."

As Mr. Johnston admits, rising standards carry the danger of the quality of life becoming so good that young people will start experimenting with drugs as a novelty once they take the improved facilities for granted. But living and working conditions will have to improve considerably before that is a serious threat. While higher prices deter experimentation, they can also force addicts into crime and increase the sophistication of the traffickers.

"If you pull on one end of the rope," Mr. Johnston says, "something happens at the other end."

A development occurred in June, 1976, when the price of drugs on the street doubled in two months after a series of large-scale seizures and it became obvious that addicts were being pushed into crime to sustain their addiction. A meeting was called by the commissioner for narcotics—who coordinates the various sections of Government concerned with narcotics, including the preventive and investigative arms, the prisons, medical and health departments, social services and the information department—and it was decided that addicts must be provided with an alternative to crime. With unusual speed, the Government set up 16 methadone detoxification out-patient centres (there are now 17), with the medical department supplying the staff, the finance branch the money, the Narcotics Bureau advising on the use of the centres and at the end of the day we had a very good response. It shows the value of being multidisciplinary."

Such an approach, if not properly coordinated, can also cause confusion and uncooperative rivalry. But it also reduces the possibility of corruption, an ever-present danger in tackling the narcotics trade and one which is particularly relevant given Hongkong's history of police corruption.

Treatment facilities now

include an acupuncture and electro-stimulation centre for heroin, morphine and opium addicts (90 per cent of addicts take heroin, on average of \$30 a day).

In July, Mr. Fred Ting, the acting commissioner for narcotics, said more addicts than ever were seeking treatment and there were indications that the colony's drug problem was being contained. He said there were 8,167 addicts undergoing treatment (mostly based on methadone) compared with 3,159 in January, 1976. But with one addict for every 73 people, there clearly is still far to go. These figures undoubtedly reflect seizure in 1976 of 3,323 kg of opium, 291 kg of morphine and 164 kg of heroin valued at more than \$270m, which prevention officials believe represented about 20 per cent of the heroin and morphine and 60 per cent of the opium smuggled into the colony during 1976. The seizure totals for 1977 are considerably lower (124 kg of opium, 90.6 kg of morphine and 153 kg of heroin) but officials say this is an indication of the reduced traffic through Hongkong and of the Thai Government's much tougher approach to the problem.

That impressive haul is partly the result of an excellent stock of intelligence which has been built up in recent years. When the French connexion was broken in the early 1970s, a demand still existed in Europe which sought out an alternative area of supply.

Many Chinese communities traditionally so law-abiding and self-contained that the host police did not intrude. When the demand for drugs arose, elements in these communities security and personal links with a major area of supply, South-East Asia. So the drug trade grew rapidly, much of it, particularly heroin, coming through Hongkong.

Enforcement in the last three years has succeeded in breaking up the major syndicates. Two thousand people were prosecuted for serious drug offences last year and 3,485 in 1976, which was a 70 per cent increase over 1975. This, as well as the increasing number of methadone users, prompted Mr. Johnston to be cautiously optimistic: "There is a glimmer of hope on the horizon." It is more profitable and less risky to manufacture in and export from, say, Thailand, than to import and re-export through Hongkong. This partly explains the possibility of corruption, an ever-present danger in tackling the narcotics trade and one which is particularly relevant given Hongkong's history of police corruption.

Treatment facilities now

Treatment facilities now

Mass Transit Railway

Half way there

The ramifications of Hongkong's underground railway touch every facet of life—from living up to the radio phone-ins as angry residents complain about disruption of their daily travel arrangements through the creation of long-term confidence in Hongkong's future, to providing work for lawyers.

"One comes to the conclusion that you are building a railway to keep the lawyers of the world employed," Mr. Norman Thompson, chairman of the Mass Transit Railway Corporation, has said.

Despite a slow start by most of the international contractors, work on the colony's biggest civil engineering project is now almost half completed, with most sections on schedule. By Christmas, 10,850 metres of bored tunneling were finished.

Much of the work has been on reclaimed land, but there have been no big unexpected construction difficulties, purely because of the lengthy preparation period, during which a number of studies were made.

Boreholes were drilled throughout the length of the system and trial tunnels excavated in the most difficult sections. The information gained was given out in the tenders, and contractors added to this comprehensive knowledge of ground conditions with further boreholes and tests.

Japanese companies, which account for 30 per cent in value of the contracts placed, complain of discrimination by British supervisors and say they have encountered difficulties with a number of British technical specifications.

A more serious cause of delay was changes in the basic design and, subsequently, hold-ups in design approval arising from the nature of the project. The MTRC's consultants, Freeman Fox, check all designs and with construction at full spate, drawings are being submitted.

After last year's decision to go ahead with the HK\$5,200m (£580m) Tsun Wun extension in 1978, Mr. Thompson said that, if within the estimates would lead to other dire consequences. Most of the warnings seem unfounded, although controversy has surrounded

ted to be called on May 1, with construction starting in September. There will be 10 stations instead of the 11 originally planned because the compensation to China Dye Works at the end of the line, or the cost of diverting the railway round the factory, was considered prohibitive.

"Contractors have qualities suited to particular conditions," he said. "We like the idea of putting contractors into competition with each other, picking the best horse for each particular course."

By doing the supervision itself, the corporation was able to watch developments closely, he said. "And that is vital. If things start to go wrong, we want to know quickly."

One of the biggest upsets was caused by the decision to change the ventilation system, the implications of which are still being felt. Mr. Thompson said: "I'm sure that was a correct decision and I'm quite sure there will be no such major changes in the extension. It is all part of the pioneering role of the Modified Initial System." (Adopted after a Japanese consortium withdrew its commitment to build a larger network on a fixed price basis.)

The switch from a third rail to overhead collection also caused considerable repercussions, but the corporation says the change was "evolutionary".

The decision to air-condition the tunnels instead of using a cooling system specially designed by Kennedy and Donkin meant increasing the refrigerant capacity of the station coolers. The air has to be blown along so fans must be installed in the tunnels, which entailed altering the designs in tunnels already being driven.

This fundamental change was decided on after consideration of the potentially disastrous effect of having one or two trains stopped in the middle of a steamy Hongkong summer. (In the winter the fans will be turned off and the system will be free-vented.)

Critics seized on this and said that faulty design and cost cutting by the Government led to the project approval was obtained, a multi-contract system would be used again, although this time with engineers' design rather than design and construct. Tenders are expected

the provision of facilities for compressed-air tunnelling. This technique is a novelty in the colony, so that the labour force had to be specially trained and does not always appreciate the hazards. There is no scheme providing for sick-leave treatment centres, and the expense of the munitus operators.

Mr. Thompson says he is still happy with the revenue estimates, which are updated regularly. The main revenue earner, as for the bus companies, will be the cross-harbour section.

"We will be sensible, bearing in mind that we will do the journey in half the time compared with everybody else, and there will be no waiting," he said. "Our rolling stock will be new, we will have summer air-conditioning and we will provide the most modern transport conditions in Hongkong. We will have an edge in terms of modern conditions and rolling stock and we will be able to charge a premium."

For all the modernity, however, seating will be provided for only 48 of the 375 passengers expected to crowd into each carriage. The corporation's other estimates generally have been correct, including the letting of the contracts within budget, the rate of inflation, and construction targets. So perhaps the revenue estimates, based on a million passengers a day, rising to 1,800,000 by 1986, will be correct.

Earnings will be boosted by the property developments which the corporation is underwriting with private developers along the route. Raising finance for the \$5,800m, 15.6 kilometre initial scheme has proved easier than expected and the corporation is confident of its ability to fund the Tsun Wun extension without a government guarantee.

L.N.

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Aviation

Open market closed to arrest 'dangerous trend'

Carla Rapoport

ing for air tickets was like shopping for as or jade, but Hong's open market on air no longer exists. year, a cartel of eight airlines laid down aw: any travel agents a selling heavily dis tickets would be fi from further ticket ies.

result has been a 40 per cent increase in cost of the cheapest out of Hongkong. ers to Bangkok, Taipei and Manila been hurt most by the But it was something ad to happen, accord a officials in the Airlines Association. e have not turned our on the market for priced air travel," LA executive said. "We simply realized that markets create over- ly, which forces air- els down when costs continually rising. A ous trend had been ished that could not owed to go on."

present discount fares ill substantially lower those of the IATA car- The difference is the of irregularity of the and inability to trans-

for a ticket to a different airline.

Most feel it was a case of all good things must come to an end. Those with ingenu- ly merely telephone Bang- hou to order tickets at the old cheap prices. The end of Hongkong's price slashing business coincides with the growing complexity of the aviation industry. Hongkong remains the European air- lines' largest Far East mar- ket after Tokyo. In freight as well as passengers, business is enjoying healthy growth.

Hongkong's export tonnage climbed 15 per cent by vol- ume in 1976, and 30 per cent by value, and stood at about the same level in 1977. At the same time, imports jumped by 25 per cent by volume and 40 per cent by value in 1976 and by a further 22 per cent in volume terms last year. This increased activity was sig- nificantly eased by last year's opening of the SUS100m cargo terminal building at Kai Tak. The terminal is capable of handling three times what it did in 1976.

As for passengers, the urban airport last year bul- ged with more than 40 per cent more travellers than it was designed to accommo- date. About 3,000 people an hour passed through the air- port during peak hours.

In aircraft movements, the air control tower handled slightly fewer planes than Milan's. In cargo, Hongkong is doing the same amount of business as Copenhagen and is slightly below Orly.

With only one runway and hemmed in by mountains, Kai Tak airport recently ear- ned an "atrocious" rating from an American news mag- azine. But the terminal enjoyed an immaculate safety record for 10 years until a cargo aircraft plummeted into the sea at the end of the runway in September, killing the crew of four. Pilots say the location causes them to be on their best attention.

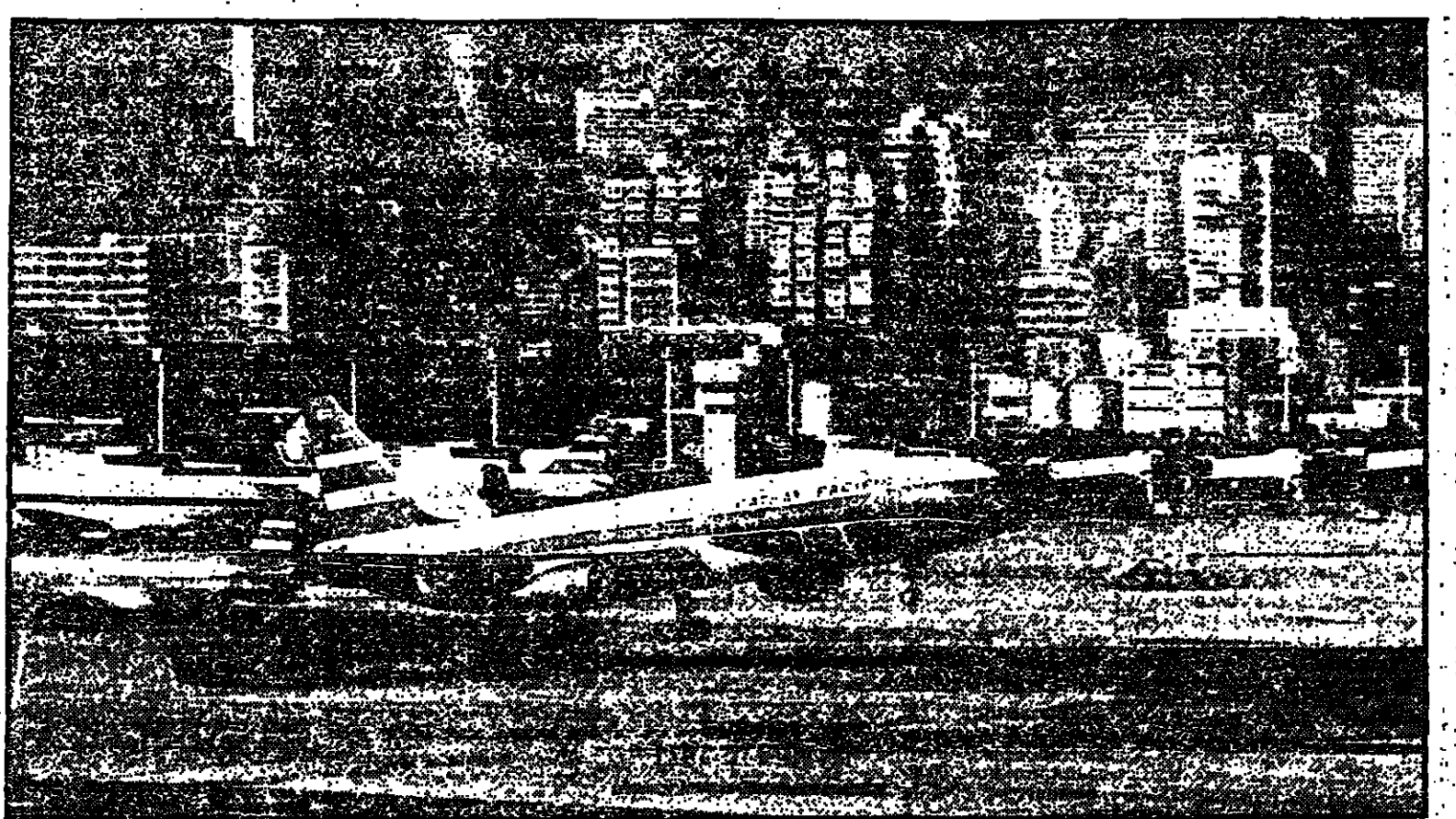
The idea of a new airport for Hongkong has been dis- cussed for many years. It may cost SUS1,000m taking ancillary services into account. It seems that Kai Tak will have to suffice for the next 10 years at least. A multi-million dollar terminal expansion pro- gramme will be completed early this year, increasing the facility's area by about 70 per cent.

In December 1976 hand- eds of Air Siam ticket holders were stranded or left with worthless tickets when the airline went through a series of stoppages before completely sus- pending operations in January.

A few months later, a strike by Australian airport workers left homeward-bound tourists stranded for a week before flights resumed. The scramble for Air Siam's routes broke into an air war between Cathay Pacific and Thai Inter- national. Talks in London early last year between the Thai and British (on behalf of Cathay) Governments dragged on for nearly four months.

Thailand banned Cathay Pacific from flying beyond Bangkok on Hongkong-Ban- kok trips, while Cathay countered with similar restric- tions on Thai. Cathay began flying passengers straight to Bangkok.

In October, representatives of Thailand and Britain re- reached agreement on a pack- age of measures to resolve the long-standing differences affecting civil aviation relations between the two coun- tries. The agreement pro- vided for the restructuring and expansion of previous services. In particular, it per- mitted Thai International to operate its new airbuses through Hongkong to Taipei and Japan; on the British side, Cathay Pacific was authorized to go ahead with its services to Penang and Singapore and to continue operations to the Middle East.



Kai Tak airport, which has a fine safety record despite having only one runway and being surrounded by mountains.

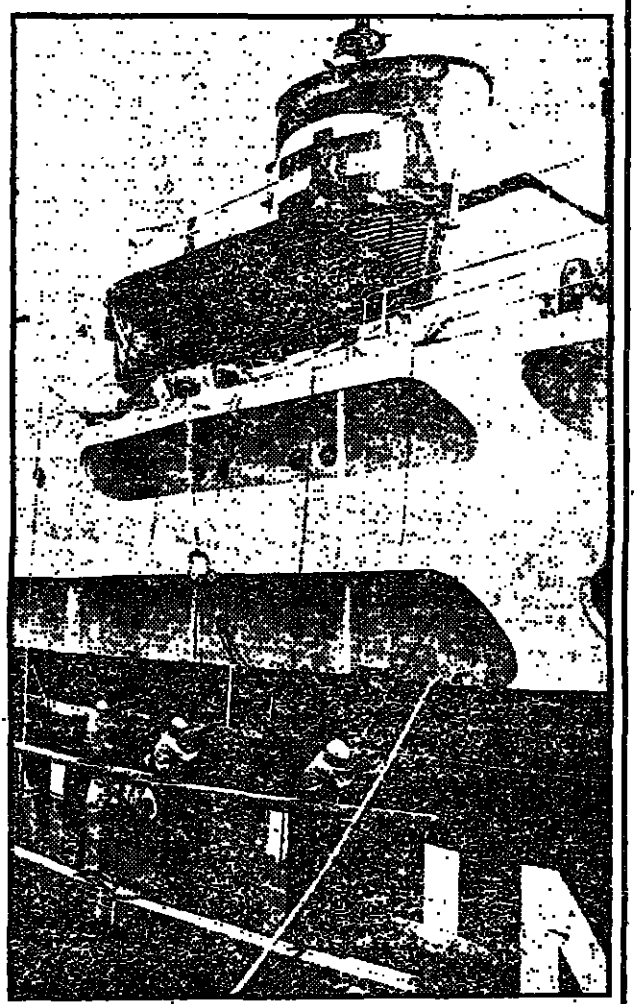
Shipping

Buoyancy in Year of the Snake

George Lauriat

ong's shipping during ear of the Snake (1977) surprisingly active, as than 15,000 ocean-going is entered and cleared port, discharging 18 million tons of Container traffic has the backbone of the ; the colony moved into place in container rankings with 1,020,000 containers.

e increase in trade was pected and exceeded the figures, before the p. of 14,649 vessels ed and cleared and 0,000 tons of cargo. ver, the over-optimistic g which prompted this revival masked many he difficulties inherent ie Asian market since le crisis and the ensuing mic chaos. The most of these is rebating, in competition and the t warlike relations bet- the Far East Freight rence and the Hong- shippers.



The Kowloon yard of Hongkong-United Dockyards.

ngkong shipping is ad into two primary s the Hongkong to pe trade and the Hong- to the west coast of the d States trade. There host of minor routes, rates on the primary s are crucial.

trans-Pacific route recent years been the of keen competition, has frequently caused ge. The 1976 trade obscured many of the s of disagreement be- competitors, as cargo plentiful, and fre- ly the difficulty was to enough slots for the rather than one of en- customers.

Trans-Pacific Confer- and the New York at Bureau, serving the d States west and east routes, broke up three ago, after Sealand led alkout, stating that ng and rate cutting the conference a y. The break-up of onference caused the g "10107" and 10108 g agreements" to be the framework for the Pacific trade.

agreements were ally designed to com- ish American federal me law, enabling non- ence carriers to discuss with the conferences. the walkout, almost all conference members the "talking agree- s as independents.

ffect the talking agree- thus became a negoti- being that 30 days must be given before increase and 48 hours a rate decrease. At ment, with 33 per cent tonnage expected on, ans-Pacific routes and reconciliation seems far

ironies occurred as a of the Trans-Pacific reice break-up. The was that the Far East- Shipping Company 20), the Soviet car- because it was a men- of the original talking nents, found itself in amounted to a confer- The second was that id, which led the walk- siding rebating and nting, was found of rebating, and, the largest Amer- ne, after investigations ie Federal Maritime ession (FMC) and the des Exchange Commis- (SEC), announced th its parent organiza- J. Reynolds, that it ed rebates amounting m over a number of ending in 1975, Sealand ned \$4m, of which \$1m ne immediately, and the ne in instalments end- 1980.

Competition from outsider lines was one of Sealand's complaints in the break-up of the Trans-Pacific Freight Conference and New York Freight Bureau. Usually, the term "outsider" was reserved for P&O, the Soviet line. Much of the publicity directed at the line occurred because it diverted attention from other controversial subjects—rebating and shipper-shipowner relations.

However, some of the not-oriety was the result of the rapid expansion of the Soviet fleet and the aggressive mar- keting drive that the Soviets mounted in the Far East. The Soviet Union's merchant fleet increased from 2,024 ships in 1966 to 7,945 vessels a decade later.

Relations with the Soviet carriers underwent a signifi- cant change with the signing of the Leningrad Agreement July 19 1976. The agree- ment was important for the Pacific trades, though it per- tained only to the North Atlantic, because it outlined the method by which a Soviet carrier could join a conference. The extraordi- nary feature of the agree- ment is that the Soviet car- rier (Baltic Shipping Com- pany) is given the right to undercut the conference tariff by 1 per cent until its service measures up to that of other members of the conference.

Recently the 10,107 and 10,108 talking agreements announced a rate increase of 15 per cent that is to be administered in a 5 per cent rise in March and 9 per cent in October. Simultaneously, Zim, the Israeli shipping line, announced that it would cut its rates by 7 per cent if P&O did not bring its rates into line with the other conference members. At a hastily-called meeting in Japan the Russians con- ceded the point and agreed to raise their rates. This move completely surprised many observers, as the rate differential was one of the ten- tions of Soviet maritime policy with Western shipping conferences.

The most pressing problem in Hongkong shipping is the relations between the Far East Freight Conference and the Hongkong shippers.

The FEFC has almost a monopoly over the move- ment of goods between Europe and Hongkong. It is the oldest and most power- ful conference in existence and is composed of old ship- ping lines like P&O, con- sortiums such as Scan- Dutch and Asian national lines such as Malaysian International Lines, Neptune Orientale and M&O, and the company of the Philippines.

The result has been that the FEFC has been able to dictate freight rates to the Hongkong shippers. In March, 1976, the freight rate was increased by 13.5 per cent and last May the FEFC decided to raise the rate another 12.5 per cent.

The rates are determined by individual submissions of the 29 lines to the London-based accountancy firm of Thomson and McLintock. These figures are then pro- cesses into various cost components and passed on to the shippers' councils as percentages. It is impossible to determine exactly what the conference's costs really are. Further, the figures that the lines submit are unsuited and only repre- sent what the individual line believes its costs to be—Thomson and McLintock has stated that it is not respon- sible for the figures.

This process makes a mockery of the negotiations. The Hongkong Shippers' Council cannot argue the merits of any rate rise because it is impossible to determine the real costs of the lines. Instead it argues what effect the rate increases will have on Hong- kong industries, which are largely light industrial goods ideally suited to con- tainerization.

Obviously there has to be some change and the conference has shown a willing- ness to listen. However, without an overhaul in the method of determining rates increases, Hongkong ship- pers will always be at odds with the lines serving the colony. Shipping is perhaps more vital to Hongkong than to any other country in the world, and without some stabilization in the rates the industry of the colony will inevitably suffer.



The Art of Communication

Hong Kong has been in the communications business for over 150 years.

The art of communication is a Chinese tradition and today the Jade stone seller continues the time-honoured practice of shrouded bargaining with his customers. This hidden sign language, known and understood only by expert Jade dealers, is an ancient communication form that still takes place on the pavements that front the towering office blocks where businessmen com- municate with the rest of the world through Cable and Wireless.

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Social welfare

Getting better all the time

by Ann Fish

Continuing criticism in the British press and Parliament has highlighted the fact that Hongkong does not have the health and welfare standards that have long been taken for granted in Britain and most of Europe. Over recent years, however, the British colony, which is totally reliant on its own entrepreneurial abilities to fill the government coffers, has taken some major steps towards providing its less privileged residents with the nucleus of a social welfare system.

Public housing, old age pensions, schooling, and care of the aged and handicapped, all remain woefully inadequate—yet within the limits of Hongkong's peculiar temporary status, considerable progress has been made over recent years.

After the Second World War, Hongkong was faced with a seemingly endless flow of refugees from China—since 1950 more than a million people have crossed the border. The first public housing scheme aimed at putting some sort of a roof over the heads of the thousands who mostly scraped out a living in the mosquito-ridden squatter areas—can now be seen as inadequate.

But the massive rehousing programme was to continue, to the tune of thousands of millions of dollars and some 1,800,000 have been accommodated. Some of the modern estates even approach the level of the modern British council house (albeit high-rise rather than bungalow-style). By the end of 1976, Hongkong's population was almost 4,500,000, of which half was under 24 years of age.

Late in 1977, Sir Murray

MacLehose, the Governor of Hongkong, outlined major proposals for social welfare improvements—estimated to cost more than HK\$1,300m. These plans were contained in a White Paper on the handicapped and Green Papers on social security, care of the aged, and personal social work for youth.

One widely acclaimed suggestion was to establish a semi-voluntary scheme under which workers can opt for monthly sickness benefits beyond the statutory 36 days as laid down by the employment ordinance. This would be achieved by a contribution of 2 per cent of a worker's salary, which would be matched by the employer. The scheme would also include provision for payment of a lump sum to the heirs of a worker who died before the age of 60.

Governments all over the world rely on taxes to finance the social needs of the people—yet in 1976 only 300,000 workers in Hongkong were eligible for salaries tax, at a maximum 15 per cent of income. Even profits tax from the 70,000-75,000 businesses eligible (levied at 17.5 per cent) did not augment the meagre total very much. The Hongkong Government's tax take in 1976 was a mere HK\$2,900m.

While Hongkong does not have a contributory national health programme, the costs of medical help to the individual are kept to a minimum. Government clinics charge only HK\$1 a visit (about 11p); this price includes the consultation and medicine required. A stay in a government hospital is only HK\$5 a day, inclusive of meals, doctors' visits, medicines and so on.

The Government provides a free primary school education for children between

six and 12 years. The approximate enrolment for September 1976 was 520,476. Compulsory primary education came into force in September 1971. Also brought in was a scheme for three years of government-aided secondary school places. By September 1978 all children leaving primary school will be given three years' government-aided secondary education.

In a Green Paper released in November, plans were outlined that would boost the availability of senior secondary places and expand government-aided tertiary and technical education over the next decade.

By 1981, the number of places in forms four and five will be raised from 19,600 to 46,800, which would enable half the 15-year-old population to have senior secondary education.

Public assistance scheme started in 1971

Expanded technical institutes would be unable to cater for nearly 14 per cent of 15-year-olds by 1981, the Green Paper said, and school equipment would be upgraded. It added that the proportion of students undertaking tertiary education provided or wholly subsidised by government would almost double by 1997.

Since the advent of the Social Welfare Department in 1958 Hongkong has seen many changes, one being the expansion of the public assistance scheme, designed to provide essential needs for families or individuals whose incomes fall below a certain level. Under this scheme, which came into

effect in April 1971, assistance is given in the form of cash grants instead of the "dry rations" provided previously.

The most important document to be produced by the Government in the history of social welfare in the colony was the five-year plan. Covering April 1973 to March 1978, it sets out in detail proposals for improving or expanding social welfare services. Formulated in close consultation with the major interests in voluntary social welfare, the plan has been reviewed annually to ensure that it is flexible and up to date.

The Social Welfare Department is divided into five divisions: social security, family services, group and community work, probation and correction, rehabilitation. There is also a training section for social workers. While social security may not be up to the standards of European countries, in the Asian context (Japan excluded) Hongkong's people are looked after fairly well.

The public assistance scheme is non-contributory and means-tested. In the form of small cash grants, it provides the needy with a way to meet the cost of essentials, such as food, clothing, fuel and light. Accommodation costs are met by a separate rent allowance (based on the appropriate rent level for public housing). Special expenses are also covered by the scheme, for example, education, dietary needs, fares for visits to people in institutions, burial and so on.

The public assistance scheme has been extended to cover able-bodied unemployed adults of working age—subject to their registering for (and not refusing) suitable employment. The

monthly basic payment for a single person without other support is only HK\$200, up to HK\$63 may be provided for rent, and again there may be special allowances for diet and so on. The system is designed to help out with essential needs until the individual can find gainful employment.

A further breakthrough in social security took place in 1973 when the disability scheme was introduced. This scheme is not subject to means test nor is it contributory. It provides a small cash allowance on top of any public assistance payment for the elderly, infirm and severely disabled.

Any person who is severely disabled regardless of age is eligible for a disability allowance of HK\$200 a month provided that he has lived in Hongkong for at least a year, or in the case of a child under one year has lived in Hongkong since birth. The recipient may not be in residential or institutional care and not receiving an infirmity allowance.

If someone lives until the age of 75, the Government gives a bonus of HK\$100 a month in the form of a disability allowance. This allowance, along with the disability allowance, is not subject to the means test. For the elderly in residential or institutional care, the Government pays the public assistance funds to the homes and each patient gets pocket money—HK\$36 a month. However, it is planned that soon the elderly in such homes will be entitled to the HK\$100 a month infirmity allowance. Another area being looked into is the lowering of the age limit for the infirmity allowance.

Another newcomer in 1973 was the criminal and

law enforcement injuries compensation scheme, which compensates victims of violence or law enforcement accident.

The social security division is also responsible for emergency relief among victims of natural and other disaster, repatriation of distressed British subjects and investigation of the circumstances of applicants for legal aid. Despite the dramatic rise in government spending on social welfare programmes in the last few years, there is still a lot of work to be done in social welfare. "But these things cannot be done overnight", he said. "Overseas aid to Hongkong this year was nil", he said, adding that he was in a position to look after our own people now, and I think we can do it."

The priority areas that the department will be concentrating on will be rehabilitation, services for the elderly and social work among youth. Rehabilitation areas for the elderly were quite a large area—accommodation, home help, services and the attention of a community nursing service. Although these services are already available, their effectiveness is tiny.

For instance, 5,200 people need care in geriatric unit or infirmaries—existing units cater for only 164. Some 9,400 need home help services—only 230 people are receiving help. Of 9,900 needing community nursing attention only 900 are catered for.

Social work among youth will be receiving considerable expansion in the future. The group and community work division of the Social Welfare Department already provides pre-grammatics in the form of friendship clubs, interest groups, mass activities, youth volunteer service projects.

Higher education

Intellect before personality

by Raymond Yao

Amidst a wide range of views on its purpose and function, tertiary education in Hongkong is at a crossroads. Its future direction has been formulated by a government committee headed by Mr Kenneth Topley, the Director of Education.

The committee has also looked into the ways and means of coping with a fast-growing demand for higher education among Hongkong's secondary school leavers.

University education is meant to play a crucial role in developing intellect and character. But the debate on which should come first is a well known and perennial one. The situation in Hongkong is more polarized.

Most Chinese parents believe that a university degree for their children is the key to higher social status and better paid government jobs. The commercial and industrial sectors see university education as nothing more than an investment in human capital which they need for future development.

On the other hand, there are educationists who believe that university education, besides academic pursuit and fulfilment, should contribute to the formation of character and development of moral consciousness of the students, virtues which a well-ordered society needs.

In Hongkong too much emphasis is placed on the intellect rather than the personality of university students. Despite periodic reminders by concerned academics, university education in Hongkong will continue for some time to be what it is today—producing mandarins and haughty bureaucrats for the Government and managers and technicians for the business and manufacturing sectors, the major contributors to the upkeep of Hongkong's two universities.

This deficiency is unlikely to be corrected in the foreseeable future. Changing the technical and managerial people necessary for industrial and economic development has long been regarded as the primary function of universities in developing countries.

However, it is noted that there has been a slow but steady restoration among students of the social role university education should play: the system should produce individuals capable of using their initiative and contributing to society and not petty bureaucrats.

There are two universities in Hongkong. The University of Hongkong was established in 1911. The Hongkong Chinese University was founded in 1963 as a federation of three constituent colleges in which the main medium of teaching is Chinese.

The two universities have been growing at an annual rate of 7 per cent since 1965. Tertiary places between 1965 and 1977 increased 2.3 times from 3,900 to 8,800, but secondary places went up 5.2 times from 16,665 to 86,520 over the same period.

It is still a luxury to enter university in Hongkong. Even university officials have to admit openly that the system is highly competitive and selective.

Those who afford the high costs of education flock overseas. From 1971 to 1976 more than 35,000 students left Hongkong for further studies in Australia, Britain, Canada and the United States, while total new enrolment at the two universities and the polytechnic for the same period was limited to between 15,000 and 16,000.

The official feeling is that Hongkong cannot afford to educate more than its economy can comfortably absorb. The dramatic expansion of the polytechnic and the proliferation of extra-mural courses offered by the two universities are seen as part of the efforts taken by

the Government and the university bureaucracy to cope with the rising demand for higher education.

This demand is expected to be aggravated in the coming years by an increasing number of young people receiving a full secondary education and by the growing difficulties of Hongkong universities which are becoming more protectionist.

In his speech on the special report of the University and Polytechnic Grants Committee (UPGC) at the local Legislative Council on June 1, Mr John Brembridge, the committee chairman, gave a detailed comparison on the development of tertiary education in Hongkong for the past decade.

UPGC, he said, is only an advisory body (though with some executive functions) operating between the highly autonomous institution and the Government; and it is the Government which must have the last say in all financial matters—subject to the consent of the Legislative Council.

"Ten years ago the full-time student population of the two universities was 3,912, and the polytechnic was only a scheme of 'visionaries', he said. "Today Hongkong University (HKU) has a full-time student population of 4,036; Chinese University (CU) 4,171; and the polytechnic 7,760 full-time equivalent, counting part-time day students as one third and evening students as a sixth. The total is 15,967."

Poor families supply two thirds of students

"In 1965-66 total government expenditure on the two universities was \$81,333m. In 1975-76 and now including the polytechnic it was \$320m, of which capital expenditure was only about 29 per cent."

The family background of the students at the two universities and the polytechnic has also undergone a drastic change. About 60 per cent of the students come from poor or very poor families (compared with an average of 15 per cent in other countries) according to the special UPGC report.

To help these financially disadvantaged students, a scheme of bursaries for needy students was set up in 1954. Last year, \$25.6m in loans and another \$6.9m in grants were given to students.

"For the next triennium 1978-81", Mr Brembridge told the council, "I believe that the total finance, including block grants, capital, and net student loans, sought from the Government will probably be of the order of \$1,300m, and that the full-time equivalent student population will rise to nearly 20,000, while we shall start on a dental school and a new medical school, both very complicated projects."

The dental school at the HKU is scheduled to produce the first batch of 60 dentists by 1985 while the medical school at CU, headed by Dr Gerald Chou, formerly the Government's medical and health director, will turn out 100 medical graduates annually, beginning in 1987.

The Governor, Sir Murray MacLehose, in his capacity as Chancellor of the CU, appointed an external commission in November 1975 to review the constitutional arrangements governing the university and its constituent colleges. The chairman of the commission was Lord Fulton of Palmer, formerly vice-chancellor of Sussex University. He was also part of the efforts taken by

mission in 1962 which recommended the university to be founded on a federal system, while allowing each college to retain its identity and a large degree of academic and administrative independence.

Like the HKU, the CU is incorporated under an ordinance of the Hongkong Government and operates under the patronage of the Crown through the Governor as Chancellor. Nevertheless, the university, with most of its staff trained in the United States, has something of an American air about it, and in certain aspects resembles an American university.

The Government's Fulton report on the future structure of the CU represented a major victory for the advocates of a more centralized

system. The second report proposed to reduce the authority of the colleges governing boards, making them only trustees of the assets they took into the university.

It recommends that all powers and functions—excluding appointment of staff, curriculum and academic development policy—be vested with the university. Offering a sop for the federalists, the report proposed that the college should look after the student-oriented arm of the dichotomous teaching system, subject-oriented teaching should be the province of the university.

Apart from the two universities, there are a number of schools offering courses of varying standards at post-secondary level. These schools are privately run



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Shares hit y wage aim doubts


Financial Editor, page 27

Edward Townsend, president of Herbert, the Coventry machine tool group which is seeking substantial additional funds to finance ambitious investment plans, is not expected to present the proposal. Enterprise Board, in turn, with a revised corporate plan for several weeks.

The company, rescued in 1975 by a government cash injection, is seeking help from the EEB and the Department of Industry about its future capital requirements, but no formal application has yet been made to EEB for more funds.

Enterprise Board has a number of applications under the government's machine tool aid scheme for assistance in a variety of development projects, but now needs extra funds to cover the next two or three years.

Revenue
Profit before Tax
Tax based on these profits
after Tax
Surplus
Earnings per Share



The Board have declared an Interim Dividend of 1.50 pence per share net (2.273 pence gross) absorbing £106,500. The earnings per share has been adjusted to the normal tax charge of 52%.

32,000 tonnes in 1974 to 117,000 tonnes in the first six months of 1977. Imports of cold-rolled sheet from Japan are said to have risen from 61,000 tonnes for 1974 to 247,000 tonnes in the first nine months of 1977. Imports of hot-rolled sheet from Spain, East Germany and

who identified himself as having tendered 400 Airco shares to BOC, has now filed a complaint in a New York court. Mr. Weinberger has charged that he and other would-be shareholders have been misled. He had known of Airco's opinion that the price was unfair. 'BOC has contended that \$5 a share is fair price. Another shareholder, Milton Fisher, filed a lawsuit accusing Airco of damaging shareholders by the refusal to tender the 400 shares off. He claimed the difference between the BOC offer and the price at which the shares could be sold in the absence of the bid.—AL

By R. W. Shakespeare

Labour troubles in the motor industry at Merseyside worsened last night when Ford announced that it was stopping all production in the transmissions factory at its Halewood plant and laying off 1,700 men.

All car production at Halewood has now been stopped for three weeks by a strike of 1,000 workers on the body-pressing departments and the lay-off of 8,000 men from the assembly area.

The standstill, which has already cost Ford production losses of more than £30m, has made more than 10,000 workers

By Clifford Webb

Mr Michael Edwardes, British Leyland's chairman, has had to change the venue for his crucial meeting tomorrow with 750 shop stewards and management representatives.

He planned to hold it in the exhibition hall at Longbridge, where similar meetings between his predecessors and employees have taken place. But so many wanted to hear at first hand his controversial plans for reorganization that Longbridge does not have room big enough.

The new meeting place is the ballroom at Chesford Grange Hotel, Kenilworth, about six

A further 12 price-fixing agreements by suppliers of ready-mixed concrete were placed on the Register of Regulations last Saturday, by the Office of Fair Trading. This brings the number of agreements in the sector registered so far to 133.

Areas referred to in agreements were: Leicester, Hinckley and Melton Mowbray; Gateshead, Newcastle, Morpeth and Ashington; Sunderland, Moughton-Le-Spring and Peterlee; Corby; Chesterfield; Leeds; Bradford; Tiverton; Barnstable; Torquay and Exeter; Darford, and the London boroughs.

Mr. Gordon Borrie, Director-General of the Office of Fair Trading, has said he will take all such cases to the Restrictive Practices Court to ask for orders stopping the companies involved giving effect to the agreements or entering into similar agreements.

Justice Geoffrey Lane, is expected to last three days. interests annual rate

interests there is running at an annual rate of £200m.

difficulties and we're trying to sort things out".

seen arriving at the Commons yesterday, where he spent more than three hours giving evidence in private session on the subject of the finances of the Select Committee on Nationalised Industries.

His appearance followed the controversy over the committee's report on the BSC's activities published earlier this week. Sir Charles had complained that it had not been provided with updated financial information for which it had asked.

Sir Charles was required to submit documents to the committee after a written order was issued through the Office of Parliament's Sergeant at Arms, on January 18.

Mr Varley, the Secretary of State for Industry, is to appear before the committee next Monday.

... ..

Year ended 30 September		
	1977	1976
	£000	£000
Group turnover	52,409	45,043
Profit before tax	3,032	1,046
Profit after tax	2,213	788
Earnings per share	43.31 p	15.28
Ordinary dividend	14.24 p	12.75

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Equities fell back.	Gold lost
Oil edged securities lost ground.	\$175.125.
	SDR's

ollar premium 4.75 per cent
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ne effective exchange rate index

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THE POINT

	Rank boys	Rank girls
Australia	1.75	1.7
Austria, Sch	31.00	29.00
Belgium Fr	66.00	63.00
Canada	2.20	2.1
Denmark Kr	11.50	11.10
Finland Mkk	8.05	7.77
France Fr	9.46	9.1
Germany Dm	4.30	4.0
Greece Dr	78.00	78.00
Hongkong S	9.30	6.80
Italy Le	1795.00	1720.00
Japan Yn	498.00	455.00
Netherlands Gld	4.59	4.37
Norway Kr	10.31	9.97
Portugal Esc	88.00	82.00
S Africa Rd	2.20	2.05
Spain Pds	166.50	159.50
Sweden Kr	9.34	8.95
Switzerland Fr	4.04	3.83
US S	2.00	1.94
Yugoslavia Dm	33.75	37.00

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Singapore agrees TV and radio import curbs

By Our Commercial Editor

An understanding is believed to have been reached for Singapore manufacturers of monochrome television sets and portable radios to restrict the increase of exports to the United Kingdom.

A delegation from Britain's Radio Industry Council (RIC) has completed talks with the Singapore manufacturers whose exports of often low-priced sets had been causing increasing anxiety to British manufacturers.

These imports rose nearly 4 per cent last year to a total of 138,477.

Whether Singapore's exports will be pegged to the 1977 levels has not yet been confirmed. The RIC has already reached an understanding with the Japanese television and audio industry to keep exports to Britain this year at a reasonable level.

These moves have come as the latest returns from the British Radio Equipment Manufacturers' Association (BREM) show what it describes as "very disappointing" levels of deliveries of colour and monochrome televisions in the United Kingdom.

There were some signs of increased TV sales in October and November but the usual seasonal uplift for sales was not as strong as had been hoped.

While TV deliveries were higher last year than in 1976, it is feared that this could be accounted for merely by an increase in import and distributor stockholding.

BREM figures to the end of November show deliveries of colour TVs of 2.69 million sets, from all sources, marginally below the comparable 1976 figures. But monochrome television deliveries outpaced the 1976 figures.

Pay halved by Montefibre

Milan, Jan 30.—Montefibre SpA, the synthetic fibres subsidiary of Montedison SpA, has told employees it can pay them only half their January salaries.

Payment will be made at the end of this week, instead of last week as it should have been, under normal circumstances. The measure affects around 20,000 workers.

Montefibre has for months been suffering heavy losses as a result of poor market conditions for its products and of internal factors. The company has repeatedly stated it needs to make 6,000 workers redundant and close down a number of loss-making plants.—Reuters.

Treasury tells MPs that government spending rise may be nearer 4 pc than projected 2.2 pc

By Melvyn Westlake

Treasury witnesses, pressed by MPs on a House of Commons Select Committee conceded yesterday that the growth in government spending between this financial year and the next, could be about 4 per cent on present calculations.

This is rather higher than the 2.2 per cent figure generally used in the Expenditure White Paper, published earlier this month.

MPs on the Expenditure Committee were trying to establish from senior Treasury officials the real extent of the growth in public expenditure in the coming financial year, which begins in April, and for subsequent years.

Difficulty of ascertaining the exact figure stems from changes in the method of comparison between years which

the Government has introduced into the latest White Paper. This has enabled Treasury economists to claim that the growth in public spending between 1977-78 and 1978-79 was as little as 2.2 per cent, while some of the critics of the latest spending plans have alleged that the real growth is closer to 8 per cent.

The 4 per cent growth increase in spending was advanced yesterday by Mr John Anson, a Treasury deputy secretary, as the best guess of the difference between the estimated outturn for spending this year, and the most likely probable outturn for the coming financial year.

The basis for this calculation was therefore a little different to that on the other various figures of spending growth that have been derived from the

Expenditure White Paper.

To assist the members of the sub-committee, in their investigations, a large number of academic and city economists had prepared papers analysing the Expenditure White Paper. Many of these were critical of both the Government's economic reasoning and its spending strategy.

Indeed, Mr Terry Ward, of the Department of Applied Economics, Cambridge, and the sub-committee's regular adviser, argued in his own paper that public spending would actually fall by 1 per cent between 1977-78 and 1978-79 if certain special factors were taken into account.

Another paper, written by Mr Terry Burns and Dr Budd of the London Business School, argues that the spending programmes are consistent with

the growth of the money supply of 11 to 13 per cent a year over the three years from March, 1977.

Their conclusion is that there will be a significant fall in the Government's need to borrow in real terms. They argued a financial policy could be followed which could just maintain single figure inflation despite certain risks.

Another of their conclusions was that the share of national output absorbed by general government expenditure on goods and services would fall steadily up to 1981-82 and would come close to the ratio observed in 1971-72. This ratio has crept up steadily from 34.5 per cent at the beginning of the decade to 41.3 per cent last year, but is now predicted to fall again steadily to 38.4 per cent by the early years of the next decade.

Dr Burns' warning on 'flight from dollar'

From Frank Vogl
Washington, Jan 30

Dr Arthur Burns, the retiring Chairman of the Federal Reserve System, gave a warning today that continued uncertainty about the future value of the dollar "could produce a disorderly, unsettling flight from dollar assets" and this could reinforce recessionary tendencies and add to the risk of fostering protectionist sentiment around the world.

The Fed chairman said in a speech to the National Press Club that technical measures taken so far would not assure a "permanently strong dollar". He said the Administration was fully aware of the problems and dangers surrounding uncertainties about the dollar's level.

Dr Burns urged the Congress and the Administration swiftly to take actions which would "protect the integrity of the dollar", and he urged swift passage of legislation to cut oil

imports, tax measures strengthening business investment and new strategies aimed at reducing American inflation.

The Fed chairman was sharply mild in his criticism of President Carter's new economic policy programmes. He said that the new measures should serve to strengthen investment and produce further gains this year in income and employment.

He said, however, that much more must be done to deal with

the problem of inflation.

Dr Burns told the Press Club that this was his final appearance at the club at the Fed's chairman, but that he planned to do several things in the future which were likely to be of public interest.

Retold the journalists: "It's not beyond the realm of possibility that I may even be joining your ranks in one town who think the time for farewell has come are mistaken."

Plea on state spending for construction

Draconian cuts on capital spending in the past have discouraged public authorities from undertaking proper long-term planning of capital investment, the National Council of Building Material Producers (BMP) says in a written submission to the Commons Expenditure Committee on government spending plans for the construction industry in the 1980s.

Mr Richard Hermon, BMP director, said yesterday that spending authorities should submit five-year capital plans supported by an analysis of the developing needs for services.

Mr Hermon said that according to the Department of the Environment's analysis of the construction content of government spending plans, expenditure in the non-housing sector in the early 1980s would be 36 per cent less in real terms than four years ago.

DoE takes on review of building industry

By John Huxley

Mr Fresson, Minister for Housing and Construction, has disclosed that the Department of the Environment is to undertake a review of the building industry.

He explained it would be essentially a "stock-taking exercise" examining various ideas put forward in the past few years for improving the industry's performance. It was hoped that proposals and policies would emerge.

Mr Fresson is known to be anxious that those within the industry should also look at its problems and possible solutions. At a meeting of the National Joint Consultative Committee for Building last week he said that while the Labour Party document *Building Britain's Future*, which contains proposals for taking part of the industry into public ownership, did not represent government

nor final party policy, there was much more to it than many people had suggested. "Whatever the merits of its



Mr Fresson, Minister for Housing and Construction: a "stock-taking exercise".

individual proposals; they show an underlying concern to improve the organization and structure of the industry.

Meanwhile, a date has been fixed for the next meeting between Mr Shore, Secretary of State for the Environment, and the "group of eight", the all-industry delegation.

Call for cut in copper production

Geneva, Jan 30.—A leading United Nations official today urged copper-mining countries to cut production to help copper prices, which have slid to their lowest in 20 years.

Mr Alister McIntyre, director of the commodities division of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (Unctad), said this was the only direct and meaningful emergency action which could be visualized in present circumstances of gross over-supply.

He was addressing delegates from more than 40 countries, including the world's leading copper producers and users, at the ninth of a series of Unctad meetings on stabilizing the market for copper.

Mr McIntyre, who is from Grenada, said the basic aim of governments should be lasting solutions, which if they consisted of substantive measures would be embodied in a comprehensive formal international commodity agreement.

Reduction of excess copper stocks would facilitate such an agreement, incorporating among other features a copper buffer stock of manageable size. Mr McIntyre added.

The five-nation intergovernmental Council of Copper Producing Countries (CIPC) at a meeting in Jakarta last month failed to agree on a joint plan to cut copper production.—Reuters.

Unique quality of AGR materials

From Professor G. N. Walton

Sir, Your editorial, January 26, which questions the choice of the Advanced Gas-cooled Reactor, fails to mention the clear technical reasons which favour the decision and about which there are no doubts.

The main materials used in the cores of all other types of power reactor in commission, without exception, have large chemical and physical instabilities which are absent in the AGR.

For instance the quantity of water in the liquid state at high temperature in the core of the Pressurized Water Reactor and the magnesium and zirconium of other types are not used in the AGR.

The latter is composed, for the most part, of steel, carbon dioxide, uranium oxide and graphite, and it is unique in being made of materials which are nearly inert with respect to each other.

You also state "Unhappily the target of 'replication' still seems a long way off for the British Nuclear Power Programme". On the contrary it is considered fortunate that in the future there is much room for improvement in the AGR.

It can be greatly simplified, particularly with respect to coolant cycles and fuel handling, and it can also be more modestly rated with respect, for instance, to gas temperatures and fuel burn-up.

The system was originally designed for very high efficiency and improvements can gain major advantages in operational reliability without serious losses in efficiency.

In view of its inherent stability the reactor type is more suitable than all other types of reactors for operation in industrial areas of high population and close to cities. As such it is likely to prove to be of value not only for our own country but also by export for other countries.

G. N. WALTON, Professor of Nuclear Technology, Department of Chemical Engineering and Chemical Technology, Imperial College of Science and Technology, Prince Consort Road, SW7.

From the Chairman of the National Coal Board

Sir, Your issue of January 25 (your issue of January 25) that if the Government sanctions two more nuclear reactors (which it has now done), there will be little chance of total coal demand reaching 100 million tons during the 1980s, and that this will be "regardless of the relative prices of coal and oil".

This was not the view which was expressed by the Generating Board in 1974 at the time the Plan for Coal was drawn up. The Tripartite report of June 1974 (para 15) stated that "the CEGB has said that it will be able to burn about 90 million tons of coal or more—the amount will depend critically on the price sensitivity with oil".

Further, the recent paper by the Department of Energy entitled *Working Document on Energy Policy* (published as Energy Commission Paper No 1) says that, assuming coal remains cheaper than oil, "coal use in

power stations is likely to rise to over 80 million tons a year; and remain at that level until towards the end of the century" (para 6.11). Our own calculations support this view.

Mr Manners is right to draw attention to the importance of coal of maintaining an efficient stock of coal-fired generating stations. Indeed the Board themselves have pressed this point upon government, and it has been recognized by the Department of Energy in their *Working Document on Energy Policy*. But he is wrong to draw the conclusion from this that the future market for coal is inevitably limited and the case for the Board's expansion plans weakened, since (subject to coal remaining competitive):

(a) there is sufficient flexibility for maintaining and flexibly increasing coal supplies to the power station market; (b) the industrial market will show potential growth for coal during the 1980s; (c) the domestic market also has prospects for development; (d) there will be increasing opportunities for exports to Western Europe and beyond; (e) in the longer-term, various forms of coal "conversion" could assume great significance.

Of course there will be cyclical movements in the market for coal, but the long-term world prospect of oil shortage makes it as important as ever to stick to the coal industry's carefully thought out investment plans.

Yours faithfully, DEREK EZRA, National Coal Board, Hobart House, Grosvenor Place, SW1.

Swallow that did not make a summer

From Mr R. P. Cordero

Sir, We should like to refer to Lord Layton's statement in his letter of January 19 about the long-term effect of the "radical change in oil prices" in relation to other commodities and hence on the cost of energy in the economies of all countries, has been a factor completely outside the range of normal economic forecasting.

This may well be so, but there is no excuse for ignoring the change. During 1974 this journal again and again advised its readers, among whom is the BSC, that fundamental changes of attitude were called for in the wake of the quadrupling of oil prices, that many countries no longer had much money to

buy other goods after paying for their oil, and that the oil price rise had not fully shown itself in the long term.

We gave our view that the current recession was comparable to the depression of the "thirties from which the industry emerged very slowly, and then only because of rearmament."

Commenting on the technical recovery in early 1976 we said: "With stocks of most steel products running down and prices moving up or price increases threatened through efforts of BSC to catch up after years of government restriction there have been surges of buying which have not reflected true demand... various factors have created a strong element

of artificiality. "Rising prices against a background of demand which has not increased significantly, clearly give a hint of what could happen if the market should be left to have insecure foundations."

In the same article we likened the apparent boomlet in steel to a single swallow that did not make a summer, and suggested it would be enjoyed only when stuffed and under glass, rather than trusted to death by eager optimists.

Yours faithfully, R. P. CORDERO, Editorial Director, Metal Bulletin, Park House, 3 Park Terrace, Worcester Park.

Limited study of US worker share experience

From Mr B. A. Cole

Sir, It is disquieting to find your Financial Editor perpetuating one of the myths of the worker share lobby. The American experience has been, in fact, therefore, generalizing the experience of less than eight companies into "the American experience".

It should not be overlooked that profit sharing in the United States developed in a similar way to pension schemes in the United Kingdom. In fact it is generally seen as part of a "retirement package", which

frequently does not include separate pension.

One might expect enlightened companies to have introduced a retirement package for their staff in the 1960s, and to achieve better results than those less enlightened. There is no reason to believe their results would have been any worse if this package had included a United Kingdom type pension scheme instead of a worker share scheme.

E. A. COLE, Drake Wood, Devonshire Avenue, Buckinghamshire, Amersham.

GALLAHER

1977 RESULTS

The Directors of Gallaher Limited announce the following figures, subject to audit, in respect of the year ended 31st December, 1977:

(All figures in £ millions)		
GALLAHER LIMITED AND SUBSIDIARY COMPANIES	1977	1976
GROUP SALES (Note 1)		
Tobacco—Domestic	958.6	768.9
—Overseas	172.3	143.3
Engineering	56.4	47.2
Optical	30.9	27.9
Distribution	189.4	143.8
	1,407.6	1,131.1
GROUP TRADING PROFIT, before Interest		
Tobacco—Domestic	28.9	29.5
—Overseas	6.3	6.4
Engineering	4.3	3.6
Optical	5.9	4.7
Distribution	4.2	2.6
	49.6	46.8
INTEREST CHARGES	6.2	5.7
GROUP PROFIT, before taxation	43.4	41.1
TAXATION (Note 2)	21.9	20.8
GROUP PROFIT, after taxation	21.5	20.3
MINORITY INTERESTS	0.3	0.2
	21.2	20.1
EXTRAORDINARY ITEMS (net of taxation) (Note 3)	(profit) 0.6	(loss) 0.8
GROUP PROFIT attributable to ordinary shareholders	21.8	19.3
ORDINARY DIVIDENDS	0.6	1.5
PROFIT retained for the year	21.2	17.8
Depreciation charged in arriving at Group Trading Profit (net of industrial grants)	9.9	10.4

NOTES

- Group Sales.
Sales exclude V.A.T. or its equivalent.
The comparison for sales of domestic tobacco products has been affected by Duty increases since March 1976.
- Taxation.
U.K. Corporation Tax has been based on a rate of 52%.
- Extraordinary Items.
The profit arises from the net profit on exchange on conversion of foreign assets and liabilities into sterling at year end rates, partly offset by the loss on sale of a subsidiary company.

BCCI stake sold by Bank of America

By Ronald Pullen

Banking Correspondent

Rumours that the Bank of America was planning to dispose of its interest in Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI) were confirmed yesterday.

To stem further speculation, the Bank of America announced that it had an arrangement with one of the other major shareholders in BCCI to take over its 24 per cent stake over the next 2½ years.

First signs that the Bank of America was reassessing its role within the BCCI emerged last year when it decided not to take up its share of a rights issue, thereby reducing its stake from 30 per cent.

There has also been some concern in banking circles in Luxembourg, where the BCCI holding company is located, that the bank had expanded so rapidly over the past couple of years that it had created some strains on management resources.

The Bank of America emphasized yesterday that its BCCI interest had been a good investment. Explaining its change of heart, it said that the original rationale of the bank with BCCI—to gain access to the rapidly growing Middle East market, where the majority of BCCI's other shareholders are prominent politicians and businessmen—had receded now that it had set up representative offices in the area.

Also, with BCCI needing frequent rights issues to maintain its capital base to support its rate of growth, Bank of America does not want to increase its stake where it has only a minority holding and little management control.

BCCI has attracted a good deal of attention recently by the way it has expanded its branch network in the United Kingdom, in sharp contrast to the retrenchment of the British clearing banks and disillusion of the American banks with their "money shop" concept which BCCI has largely taken up.

Over the past year and a half it has expanded its branches from 29 to 42. Results due shortly will show a big increase in net earnings from 1976's \$13.7m (about £7m) while total assets have increased by a third to \$2,000m and net worth doubled to \$105m with the capital ratio increasing from 3.6 to 6 per cent.

Mr Swaleh Nakvi, a director of BCCI, said yesterday that he expected growth to slow from now on but admitted that severing the link with Bank of America would help the group's ambitions to break into the United States, where present banking laws prevent it from operating while an American bank has a stake in it.

Trident is proud to present its best ever performance

	1977 Year to 30 Sept. £000's	1976 Year to 30 Sept. £000's
Turnover	60,541	47,178
Pre-tax Profit	7,355	4,826
Earnings per share	7.6p	5.7p
Dividend per share	2.8p	2.3p
Net Assets per share	38.7p	25.7p

Demand for TV advertising on both Trident TV stations, Tyne Tees and Yorkshire, rose by 30% over the previous year ended 30th September, making Trident Television the second highest earner in the ITV network for the entire period. This buoyant demand is reflected in the year's highly satisfactory results.

Other highlights of Trident's year included the acquisition of Windsor Safari Park, now undergoing a major re-organisation and extension; the completion of Trident Films'

first feature film 'The Four Feathers' and a successful first 10 months overseas sales drive by the recently formed Trident Anglia Sales organisation.

Sales of TV advertising time should remain buoyant throughout the current trading year and Trident expect to make further progress.

Mr Ward Thomas, the Chairman, says in his Annual Report, "I see 1978 as a year of continued growth and increased profit."

Annual Report available from: The Secretary, Trident House, Brooks Mews, W1Y 2PN



Trident Television Limited



§ Forward bargains are permitted on two previous days

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Business to Business

Commercial and Industrial Property

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I.K. based Agent will launch and establish your product on the African continent. Funding, stockholding and shipping arranged.

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sale—your same expanding area. Good with most, small, medium, large, own yard and parking.

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Wishes to form an idea or enterprise in need of support. This scale of operation would be small and preference would be given to a small business. Projects must be capable of development. Please write to:

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or advertising details of Investment, finance, Businesses For Sale, Business opportunities and other successful classifications in Business to Business every weekday ring:

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TRAVEL AGENCY
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doublet special wishes. One More Time (London and South-East only). The Oregon Trail. The Good Old Days. News. Play: Destiny, by David Edgar. Tonight. The Engineers, part 4: Bob Allison. M. Weatherman. and white.

We reply to Box 0712 K, The Times

10. CHARTER/BOAT. East-Porter South. Boat. GIP modern fast boat. 40 hp engine. 1000 cc. 1100 cc. 1300 cc. 1500 cc. 1700 cc. 1900 cc. 2100 cc. 2300 cc. 2500 cc. 2700 cc. 2900 cc. 3100 cc. 3300 cc. 3500 cc. 3700 cc. 3900 cc. 4100 cc. 4300 cc. 4500 cc. 4700 cc. 4900 cc. 5100 cc. 5300 cc. 5500 cc. 5700 cc. 5900 cc. 6100 cc. 6300 cc. 6500 cc. 6700 cc. 6900 cc. 7100 cc. 7300 cc. 7500 cc. 7700 cc. 7900 cc. 8100 cc. 8300 cc. 8500 cc. 8700 cc. 8900 cc. 9100 cc. 9300 cc. 9500 cc. 9700 cc. 9900 cc. 10100 cc. 10300 cc. 10500 cc. 10700 cc. 10900 cc. 11100 cc. 11300 cc. 11500 cc. 11700 cc. 11900 cc. 12100 cc. 12300 cc. 12500 cc. 12700 cc. 12900 cc. 13100 cc. 13300 cc. 13500 cc. 13700 cc. 13900 cc. 14100 cc. 14300 cc. 14500 cc. 14700 cc. 14900 cc. 15100 cc. 15300 cc. 15500 cc. 15700 cc. 15900 cc. 16100 cc. 16300 cc. 16500 cc. 16700 cc. 16900 cc. 17100 cc. 17300 cc. 17500 cc. 17700 cc. 17900 cc. 18100 cc. 18300 cc. 18500 cc. 18700 cc. 18900 cc. 19100 cc. 19300 cc. 19500 cc. 19700 cc. 19900 cc. 20100 cc. 20300 cc. 20500 cc. 20700 cc. 20900 cc. 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